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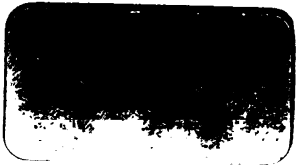

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BLACKMORE

Swift through the spacious gulph she urg'd her way
At length emerg'd in empyrean day.

Engrav'd by J. Neagle Philad.

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

BRITISH POETS.

WITH

LIVES OF THE AUTHORS,

BY

EZEKIEL SANFORD.

VOL. XV.

PRIOR, &c.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY MITCHELL, AMES, AND WHITE.
William Brown, Printer.
1819.

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Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the sixteenth day of March in the forty-third year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1819, Ezekiel Sanford, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"The Works of the British Poets. With Lives of the Authors, by Ezekiel Sanford."

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D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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SELECT POEMS

OF

MATHEW PRIOR.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

EZEKIEL SANFORD.

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LIFE OF PRIOR.

MATHEW PRIOR, the son of obscure parents,* was born at Winburn, in Dorsetshire, July 21st, 1664. At the death of his father, he came to the hands of his uncle, Mr. Samuel Prior, who was a vintner, and the host of Rummer tavern, near Charing Cross, in London. He went, for a time, to the Westminster school; but was taken away, when somewhat advanced in his studies; and would, perhaps, have died in the obscurity of his birth, had not the earl of Dorset, as it is said, accidentally discovered him reading Horace, and been so well pleased with his proficiency as to undertake the expense of his education.

He entered St. John's college, in Cambridge, in 1682; became a bachelor, in 1686; and took his master's degree in 1700. In 1688, he produced his poem on the *Deity;* and it was in the same year, that he assisted Halifax in worrying Dryden with the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*. There is reason to believe, that Halifax's share in this poem was extremely small; and 'Lord Peterborough, (says Mr. Scott,) on being asked whether the satire was

* He seems to have taken pains to conceal his origin. Some have said, he was the son of a joiner, in London: but, as he is registered, in his college, as *Filius Georgii Prior, Generosi*, he either was, or was determined to be thought, the son of less ignoble parents.

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not written by Montague in conjunction with Prior, answered, 'Yes; as if I, seated in Mr. Cheselden's chaise, drawn by his fine horse, should say, *Lord!* how finely we draw this chaise!'*

'There is (says Dr. Johnson) a story of great pain suffered, and of tears shed, on this occasion, by Dryden, who thought it hard, that 'an old man should be so treated by those to whom he had always been civil.' By tales like these is envy, raised by superior abilities, every day gratified: when they are attacked, every one hopes to see them humbled; what is hoped, is readily believed; and what is believed is confidently told. Dryden had been more accustomed to hostilities, than that such enemies should break his quiet; and, if we can suppose him vexed, it would be hard to deny him sense enough to conceal his uneasiness.'

Perhaps there are few summary deductions in the *Lives of the Poets*, which are more readily assented to than this. It seems as if it should be so; and what seems rational is easily believed to be true. Yet, if we may trust what has come under our own observation, the hostilities of early days are not calculated to render us callous to ridicule in old age. Men look forward to three score as a season of quiet. Their object is no longer to fight,—but to enjoy; and they think it peculiarly ungenerous to be attacked at a time, when they have lost both the disposition and the power to defend themselves. We have known old men cry out for mercy at a single gibe in the newspapers; who, in the heat of juvenile blood, would have rejoiced at the opportunity of battle, and returned column for paragraph. It is known, that Dryden, though he stept forth against Stillingfleet in his earlier days, most promptly bent the knee to Collier,† in his old age; and,

* Scott's Life of Dryden, p. 330.

† 'I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, (says he, in the preface to the *Fables*,) because, in many things, he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which

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as he was much more sensitive to ridicule than logic, we can easily believe, that even the tears sprung, when he found himself, 'an old man,' exposed as a laughing-stock by Halifax and Prior, whom he had never molested.

But, the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, if it did not afflict Dryden, was the means of procuring the advancement of the authors. Montague was preferred first; but Prior had an abundant, though a more tardy, reward. He was sent, in 1691, as secretary of the embassy to the Congress at the Hague, for forming the grand alliance against Lewis; and his conduct, in that capacity, was so satisfactory to King William, that he was afterwards made one of the gentlemen of the bed chamber. We hear no more of him, till the year 1695; when, with all the rest of the poets, he wrote an elegiac ode on the death of Queen Mary. He was secretary of the embassy to Ryswick, in 1697; and is said to have received 200 guineas, from the Lord's Justices, 'for the trouble' of bringing home the treaty. Prior unquestionably knew what it was for.

In 1698, he was sent in the same capacity to the Court of France. He was one day surveying the apartments of Versailles; and the company, having showed him, among other things, the victories of Louis, ostentatiously painted by Le Brun, and as ostentatiously displayed in the rooms, asked whether the palace of the king of England had any such decorations. 'The monuments of my master's actions,' answered Prior, 'are to be seen every where but

can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad to be otherwise. It becomes not me to draw my pen in defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one.' In his prime, Dryden was not wont to yield a point in this manner; and we see that one of the very occasions of so much repentance, was his former readiness to draw his pen in defence of that cause, good or bad, which accident or choice had made his own.

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in his own house.' He may have been asked such a question; and he may have returned this answer. But the French are not a people to ask a stranger such a question by way of suggesting an invidious comparison between the kings of the two nations; and Prior must either have wanted discernment to perceive the fact, or gratitude enough to abstain from insulting a company of the most polite people in the world, who were endeavouring to gratify his curiosity with the sights in Paris.

In 1699, Prior was with the king at Loo; and, being sent with despatches to England, was made under secretary of State. He soon lost that office by the removal of Jersey, the Secretary; but was compensated by the appointment of Commissioner of Trade. In the following year he wrote the *Carmen Seculare;* a pendict of all the flattering things that he could say concerning his master King William. The author of the *English Dictionary* very appropriately notices, that, 'among the advantages to arise from the future years of William's reign, Prior mentions a *Society of useful Arts*, and among them,

> Some that with caution eloquence shall teach,
> And to just ideas fix our doubtful speech;
> That from our writers distant realms may know
> The thanks we to our monarch's owe,*
> And schools profess our tongue through every land,
> That has invok'd his aid, or bless'd his hand.

'Tickell' he continues, 'in his *Prospect of Peace*, has the same hope of a new Academy:—

> In happy chains our daring language bound
> Shall sport no more in arbitrary sound.'

* It may have occurred to the biographer, that it would neither violate the nature, nor the truth, if his own name should be substituted for the word *monarchs*.

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When we reflect, that Dr. Johnson, singly, atchieved more than the whole French Academy together, perhaps we shall excuse the contempt with which he generally speaks of such institutions. He sums up his objections in the Life of Roscommon; who 'formed (says he) the plan of a society for refining our language, and fixing its standard;' 'in imitation,' says Fenton, 'of those learned and polite societies with which he had been acquainted abroad.' In this design his friend Dryden is said to have assisted him. The same design, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift in the university of Oxford; but has never since been publicly mentioned, though at that time great expectations were formed, by some, of its establishment and effects. Such a society, perhaps, might, without much difficulty, be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it may be doubted.'

'The Italian academy seems to have attained its end. The language was refined, and so fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined their language, and doubtless thought rightly; but the event has not shown that they fixed it; for the French of the present time is very different from that of the last century.' The great philologist proceeds to state how Englishmen would delight in violating the rescripts of such an academy among themselves. 'We live in an age, (says he,) in which it is a kind of public sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an English academy (he thinks) would probably be read by many, only that they might be sure to disobey them.' It seems to be idle to talk of their issuing edicts. They would know better than to assume so dictatorial an office; it would not be necessary; nor do we suppose, that such a thing ever entered the head of any literary projector. Dr. Johnson's own success, too, has overturned his theory concerning the untractability of his country-

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men; and, if we except the stories of his knocking one man down, with a folio, and throwing another across the stage, for getting into his chair, we know not, that he was accustomed to 'enforce respect,' with any other weapons than logic and good sense.

In the parliament of 1701, Prior was returned as a member from East Grenstead; and it was about the same time, that he changed his Whig principles for Tory. The victory of Blenheim was not passed over by him,—nor by any other person in the kingdom, who could write two lines of verse. About the year 1705, he published a volume of poems; beginning with his *College Exercises*, and ending with the *Nut-brown Maid*. The battle of Ramillies, in the following year, furnished him with the next topic of versification; but he wrote nothing more till 1710; when he undertook to ridicule, in the *Examiner*, Garth's verses to Godolphin. In July, of the following year, he was despatched privately to Paris with proposals for a peace; and, in about a month, returned with the Abbe Gaultion, and M. Mesanger, a plenipotentiary from the French court. The negociation was commenced at Prior's house; and he was himself one of the number empowered to sign the treaty.

When the negociations at Utrecht were consuming time without advancing the treaty, Bolingbroke was despatched to Paris to settle matters with less ceremony. Prior followed him; and was left behind, in the character of ambassador. It would seem, that Bolingbroke, in his attempt to finish the business in a hurry, committed some mistake, which offended the French court; and he accordingly writes, 'Dear Mat, hide the nakedness of thy country, and give the best turn thy fertile brain will furnish thee with to the blunders of thy countrymen, who are not much better politicians than the French are poets.' The duke of Shrewsbury was,

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soon after, sent on a formal embassy to France; and, refusing to be associated with a person of Prior's low birth, our poet acted without a title, until his high-born grace returned. He had acquired the favour of the king, and the confidence of his ministers. But his dignity seems to have been rather meanly supported. He had no service of plate; and, when the Tories fell, in August, 1714, he could not return to England, in consequence of the debts, which he had contracted.

He could not release himself, till about March of the following year; and, as soon as he reached England, he was seized with a warrant; put under custody; and, in due time, examined before a committee of the privy council, respecting the treaty, which had, four years before, been brewed so secretly at his house. His examiners, elate with recent success, interrogated him in the most boisterous manner; and, at length, bullied him into a confession, which, as he afterwards acknowledged, might, in a court of judicature, have been totally contradicted. He was afterwards put under stricter confinement; nor was he included in the Act of Grace, which was passed in 1717. But he wrote his *Alma*, in the mean time; and was, not long afterwards, set at liberty. He was now, to use an expression of Waller's, 'left like a whale upon the strand;' but, with the assistance of his friends, he soon enabled himself to be once more in motion. He published a volume of poems, with the price of two guineas; and the sale amounted, in all, to about four thousand. Lord Harley, son of his old friend, the Earl of Oxford, purchased and leased to him for life the estate of Down-Hill; and Prior had, at last, a comfortable shelter for his old age. But his health declined; and he grew deaf; 'for,' as he says, 'he took little care of his ears while he was not sure that his head was his own.' He died at

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Walpole, September 18th, 1721; and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He left five hundred pounds to buy a monument.

EPITAPH.

Sui Temporis Histoream meditanti,
Paulatim obrepens Febris
Operi simul et Vitæ filum obrupit,
Sept. 18. An. Com. 1721. Ætat. 57.
H. S. E.
Vir Eximius
Serenissimis
Regi Gulielmo Reginæque Mariæ
In Congressione Fœderatorum
Hagæ anno 1690 celebrata,
Deinde Magnæ Britannæ Legatis
Tum iis,
Qui Anno 1697 Pacem Ryswicki, confecerunt,
Tum iis,
Qui apud Gallos annis proximis Legationem obierunt;
Eodem etiam anno 1697 in Hibernia
Secretarius;
Arenon in utroque Honorabili consessu
Eorum,
Qui anno 1700 ordinandis Commercii negotiis,
Quique anno 1711 dirigendis Portorii rebus,
Præsidebant,
Commissionarus;
Pastremo
Ab Anna
Felicissimæ memoriæ Regina
Ad Ludovicum XIV. Galliæ Regem
Missus anno 1711
De pace stabilienda,
(Pace etiamnum durante
Duique ut boni jam omnes sperant duratura)
Cum summa potestate Legatus
MATHÆUS PRIOR, Armiger:
Qui
Hos omnes, quibus cumulatus, est, Titulos
Humanitatis, Ingenii, Euruditionis laude
Superavit;
Cui enim nascenti faciles arriserant Musæ.
Hunc Puerum Schola hic Regia pupolavit;

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Juvenem in Collegis S' ti Johannis
Cantabrigia optimis Scientiis instruxit;
Virum denique auxit; et perfecit
Multa cum viris Principibus consuetudo;
Ita natus, ita institutus,
A Vatum Choro avilli nunquam potuit,'
Sed solebat sæpe rerum Civilium gravitatem
Amoenicrum Literarum studiis condire.
Et cum omne adeo Poetices genus
Haud infiliciter tentaret,
Tum in Fabellis concinne lepideque texendis
Mirus Artifex
Neminem habuit parem.
Hæc liberalis animi oblectamenta;
Quam nullo Illi labore constiterint,
Facile ii perspexere, quibus usus est Amici;
Apud quos Urbanitatum et Leporum plenus
Cum ad rem, quæcunque forte incideret,
Apte, varie, copioseque alluderet
Interea nihil quæsitum, nihil vi expressum
Videbatur,
Sed omnia ultro affluere,
Et quasi jugi a fonte effatim exuberare
Ita suos tandem dubios reliquit,
Essetne in Scriptis, Poeta Elegantior,
An in Convictu Comes Jucundior.

Little is known of Prior's domestic habits. He is said to have been very companionable; and so little fastidious in his choice of society, that he was equally at home with a statesman, a soldier, or a drab. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*,* says, he was assured, that, after spending the evening with Oxford, Bolingbroke, Pope, and Swift, he would go and smoke a pipe and drink ale with a common soldier and his wife. His Chloes were of the lowest order; and one of them is said to have stolen his plate and run away. His jovial disposition may be collected from a letter to Swift. 'I have,' (says he,) 'treated lady Harriot at Cambridge (a fellow of a College treat!) and spoke verses to

* Vol. lvii. p. 1039.

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her in a gown and cap! What, the plenipotentiary so far concerned in the damned peace of Utrecht; the man that makes up half the volume of terse prose, that makes up the report of the committee, speaking verses! *sic est homo sum.*' He found, at last, then, that he was nothing more than man. He sat at the opera one evening, by the side of a Frenchman; who accompanied the principal singer with his voice. Prior, in return, began to rail obstreperously against the singer; and, when the Frenchman, at length, ceased singing, and wondered how Prior should thus abuse a person, who was confessedly the soul of the stage. 'I know all that,' said Prior; 'but he sings so loud, that it is impossible for me to hear you.' At another time, he was in a company, where every one was to sing a titrastich, ending with *Bannissons le Melancholie.* Prior was preceded by a young lady, who sat next him,—whether beautiful or not, is immaterial. He addressed her with—

> **Mais cette voix, et ces beaux yeaux**
> **Font Cupidon trop dangereux**
> **Et je suis triste quand je crie,**
> **Bannissons le Melancholie.**

The writer of Prior's Epitaph has rightly said, that the muses smiled upon his birth. The whole Nine may be said to have smiled; for he has tried every sort of verse, from the heroic to the hudibrastic; and, what is a rare felicity, has treated all with so equal a hand, that it is difficult to designate the one in which he excels. His stock of thought is never copious; but what he has, he turns to the best account. His language is neat, pure, and, in general, smooth; seldom stiffened by new coined or unused terms; deformed by quaint phrases; or debased by vulgar modes of expression. In his light pieces he is gay and easy; but, in his graver efforts, he becomes too serious and formal. Wit

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is the natural element of his mind; and, when he assumes dignity, he loses his gracefulness. His poetical faculties were not of the highest order; and it may be questioned whether they were the gift of nature, or the acquirements of study.

We have here to notice another instance of Dr. Johnson's disposition to retract, in one place, the praise, which he has given in another. Speaking of Prior's *Tales*, he says, 'they are written with great familiarity and great sprightliness; the language is easy, but seldom gross, and the numbers smooth, without appearance of care.' When giving the author's general character, a little after, 'his expression (says the same critic) has every mark of laborious study; the line seldom seems to have been formed at once; the words did not come till they were called, and were then put by constraint in their places, where they do their duty, but do it sullenly.'

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SOLOMON

ON THE

VANITY OF THE WORLD.

A POEM. IN THREE BOOKS.

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SOLOMON

ON THE

VANITY OF THE WORLD.

PREEACE.

It is hard for a man to speak of himself with any tolerable satisfaction or success: he can be no more pleased in blaming himself, than in reading a satire made on him by another; and though he may justly desire that a friend should praise him, yet, if he makes his own panegyric, he will get very few to read it. It is harder for him to speak of his own writings. An author is in the condition of a culprit; the public are his judges: by allowing too much, and condescending too far, he may injure his own cause, and become a kind of *felo de se;* and by pleading and asserting too boldly, he may displease the court that sits upon him: his apology may only heighten his accusation. I would avoid these extremes; and though, I grant, it would not be very civil to trouble the reader with a long preface before he enters upon an indifferent poem, I

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would say something to persuade him to take it as it is, or to excuse it for not being better.

The noble images and reflections, the profound reasonings upon human actions, and excellent precepts for the government of life, which are found in the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and other books commonly attributed to Solomon, afford subjects for finer poems in every kind than have, I think, as yet appeared in the Greek, Latin, or any modern language: how far they were verse in their original, is a dissertation not to be entered into at present.

Out of this great treasure, which lies heaped up together in a confused magnificence, above all order, I had a mind to collect and digest such observations and apothegms as most particularly tend to the proof of that great assertion, laid down in the beginning of the Ecclesiastes, 'All is vanity.'

Upon the subject thus chosen, such various images present themselves to a writer's mind, that he must find it easier to judge what should be rejected, than what ought to be received. The difficulty lies in drawing and disposing, or (as the painters term it) in grouping such a multitude of different objects, preserving still the justice and conformity of style and colouring, the *simplex duntaxat et unum*, which Horace prescribes as requisite to make the whole picture beautiful and perfect.

As precept, however true in theory, or useful in practice, would be but dry and tedious in verse, especially if the recital be long; I found it necessary to form some story, and give a kind of body to the Poem. Under what species it may be comprehended, whether Didascalic or Heroic, I leave

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to the judgment of the critics, desiring them to be favourable in their censure, and not solicitous what the poem is called, provided it may be accepted.

The chief personage or character in the Epic is always proportioned to the design of the work, to carry on the narration and the moral. Homer intended to show us, in his Iliad, that dissentions amongst great men obstruct the execution of the noblest enterprises, and tend to the ruin of a state or kingdom: his Achilles, therefore, is haughty and passionate, impatient of any restraint by laws, and arrogant in arms. In his Odysses the same poet endeavours to explain, that the hardest difficulties may be overcome by labour, and our fortune restored after the severest afflictions: Ulysses, therefore, is valiant, virtuous, and patient. Virgil's design was to tell us, how, from a small colony established by the Trojans in Italy, the Roman empire rose, and from what ancient families Augustus (who was his prince and patron) descended. His hero, therefore, was to fight his way to the throne, still distinguished and protected by the favour of the gods. The poet, to this end, takes off from the vices of Achilles, and adds to the virtues of Ulysses; from both perfecting a character proper for his work in the person of Æneas.

As Virgil copied after Homer, other Epic poets have copied after them both. Tasso's *Gierusalemme Liberata* is directly Troy-town sacked, with this difference only, that the two chief characters in Homer, which the Latin poet had joined in one, the Italian has separated in his Godfrey and Rinaldo; but he makes them both carry on his work with very great success. Ronsard's *Franciade*, (in-

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comparably good as far as it goes) is again Virgil's Æneis. His hero comes from a foreign country, settles a colony, and lays the foundation of a future empire. I instance in these as the greatest Italian and French poets in the Epic. In our language Spenser has not contented himself with this submissive manner of imitation; he launches out into very flowery paths, which still seem to conduct him into one great road. His Fairy-Queen (had it been finished) must have ended in the account which every knight was to give of his adventures, and in the accumulated praises of his heroine Gloriana. The whole would have been an heroic poem, but in another cast and figure than any that had ever been written before. Yet it is observable that every hero (as far as we can judge by the books still remaining) bears his distinguished character, and represents some particular virtue conducive to the whole design.

To bring this to our present subject. The pleasures of life do not compensate the miseries: age steals upon us unawares; and death, as the only cure of our ills, ought to be expected, but not feared. This instruction is to be illustrated by the action of some great person. Who, therefore, more proper for the business than Solomon himself? And why may he not be supposed now to repeat what, we take it for granted, he acted almost three thousand years since? If, in the fair situation where this prince was placed, he was acquainted with sorrow; if, endowed with the greatest perfections of Nature, and possessed of all the advantages of external condition, he could not find happiness; the rest of mankind may safely take

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the Monarch's word for the truth of what he asserts. And the author who would persuade that we should bear the ills of life patiently, merely because Solomon felt the same, has a better argument than Lucretius had, when, in his imperious way, he at once convinces and commands that we ought to submit to death without repining, because Epicurus died.

The whole Poem is a soliloquy: Solomon is the person that speaks: he is at once the hero and the author; but he tells us very often what others say to him. Those chiefly introduced, are his Rabbies and Philosophers in the first book; and his Women and their Attendants, in the second: with these the Sacred History mention him to have conversed, as likewise with the angel brought down, in the third book, to help him out of his difficulties, or at least to teach him how to overcome them:

Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus.

I presume this poetical liberty may be very justly allowed me on so solemn an occasion.

In my description, I have endeavoured to keep to the notions and manners of the Jewish nation at the time when Solomon lived; and where I allude to the customs of the Greeks, I believe I may be justified by the strictest chronology, though a poet is not obliged to the rules that confine an historian. Virgil has anticipated two hundred years, or the Trojan hero and Carthaginian queen could not have been brought together: and without the same anachronism several of the finest parts of his Æneis must have been omitted. Our countryman, Mil-

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ton, goes yet further: he takes up many of his material images some thousands of years after the fall of man; nor could he otherwise have written, or we read, one of the sublimest pieces of invention that was ever yet produced. This likewise takes off the objection, that some names of countries, terms of art, and notions in natural philosophy, are otherwise expressed than can be warranted by the geography or astronomy of Solomon's time. Poets are allowed the same liberty in their descriptions and comparisons, as painters in their draperies and ornaments: their personages may be dressed not exactly in the same habits which they wore, but in such as make them appear most graceful. In this case, probability must atone for the want of truth. This liberty has indeed been abused by eminent masters in either science: Raphael and Tasso have shewed their discretion, where Paul Veronese and Ariosto are to answer for their extravagances. It is the excess, not the thing itself, that is blameable.

I would say one word of the measure in which this and most poems of the age are written. Heroic, with continued rhyme, as Donne and his contemporaries used it, carrying the sense of one verse most commonly into another, was found too dissolute and wild, and came very often too near prose. As Davenant and Waller corrected, and Dryden perfected it, it is too confined: it cuts off the sense at the end of every first line, which must always rhyme to the next following, and, consequently, produces too frequent an identity in the sound, and brings every couplet to the point of an epigram. It is indeed too broken and weak to

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convey the sentiments and represent the images proper for Epic; and as it tires the writer while he composes, it must do the same to the reader while he repeats, especially in a poem of any considerable length.

If striking out into blank verse, as Milton did, (and in this kind Mr. Philips, had he lived, would have excelled) or running the thought into alternate and stanza, which allows a greater variety, and still preserves the dignity of the verse, as Spenser and Fairfax have done; if either of these, I say, be a proper remedy for my poetical complaint, or if any other may be found, I dare not determine; I am only inquiring in order to be better informed, without presuming to direct the judgment of others. And while I am speaking of the verse itself, I give all just praise to many of my friends, now living, who have in Epic carried the harmony of their numbers as far as the nature of this measure will permit: but, once more, he that writes in rhymes dances in fetters; and as his chain is more extended, he may certainly take larger steps.

I need make no apology for the short digressive panegyric upon Great Britain in the first book: I am glad to have it observed, that there appears throughout all my verses a zeal for the honour of my country: and I had rather be thought a good Englishman, than the best poet or greatest scholar that ever wrote.

And now as to the publishing of this piece; though I have in a literal sense observed Horace's *nonum prematur in annum*, yet have I by no means obeyed our poetical lawgiver, according to the

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spirit of the precept. The Poem has indeed been written and laid aside much longer than the term prescribed; but in the meantime I had little leisure, and less inclination, to revise or print it. The frequent interruptions I have met with in my private studies, and great variety of public life in which I have been employed, my thoughts (such as they are) having generally been expressed in foreign language, and even formed by a habitude very different from what the beauty and elegance of English poetry requires; all these, and some other circumstances, which we had as good pass by at present, do justly contribute to make my excuse in this behalf very plausible. Far, indeed, from designing to print, I had locked up these papers in my 'scritoire, there to lie in peace till my executors might have taken them out. What altered this design, or how my 'scritoire came to be unlocked before my coffin was nailed, is the question. The true reason I take to be the best: many of my friends, of the first quality, finest learning, and greatest understanding, have wrested the key from my hands by a very kind and irresistible violence; and the Poem is published, not without my consent indeed, but a little against my opinion, and with an implicit submission to the partiality of their judgment. As I give up here the fruits of many of my vacant hours to their amusement and pleasure, I shall always think myself happy if I may dedicate my most serious endeavours to their interest and service: and I am proud to finish this Preface by saying, that the violence of many enemies, whom I never justly offended, is abundantly recompensed by the goodness of more

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friends, whom I can never sufficiently oblige: and if I here assume the liberty of mentioning my Lord Harley and Lord Bathurst as the authors of this amicable confederacy, among all those whose names do me great honour in the beginning of my book,* these two only ought to be angry with me; for I disobey their positive order, whilst I make even this small acknowledgment of their particular kindness.

* The folio edition of 1718, to which is prefixed a most numerous list of honourable and celebrated names as subscribers.

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KNOWLEDGE.

BOOK I.

TEXTS CHIEFLY ALLUDED TO IN THIS BOOK.

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem, Eccles. chap. i. ver. 1.

Vanity of vanities, (saith the Preacher) vanity of vanities; all is vanity, ver. 2.

I communed with mine own heart, saying, 'Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge, ver. 16.

He spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes, 1 Kings, chap. iv. ver. 33.

I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him, Eccles. chap. iii. ver. 14.

He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh.

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from the beginning to the end, Eccles. chap. iii. ver. 11.

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow, chap. i. ver. 18.

And further, by these, my son, be admonished; of making many books there is no end: and much study is a weariness of the flesh, chap. xii. ver. 12.

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SOLOMON.

KNOWLEDGE.

BOOK I.

Ὁ Βιος γαρ ονομ εχει πονος δ' εργῳ πελει. *Eurip.*

Siquis Deus mihi largiatur, ut ex hac ætate repuerascam, et in cunis vagiam, valde recusem. *Cic. de Senect.*

The bewailing of man's miseries hath been elegantly and copiously set forth by many, in the writings as well of philosophers as divines; and it is both a pleasant and a profitable contemplation.
Lord Bacon's Advancement of Learning.

THE ARGUMENT.

Solomon, seeking happiness from knowledge, convenes the learned men of his kingdom; requires them to explain to him the various operations and effects of Nature; discourses of vegetables, animals, and man; proposes some questions concerning the origin and situation of the habitable earth; proceeds to examine the system of the visible heaven; doubts if there may not be a plurality of worlds; inquires into the nature of spirits and angels; and wishes to be more fully informed as to the attributes of the Supreme Being. He is imperfectly answered by the Rabbins and Doctors; blames his own curiosity; and concludes that, as to human science, ALL IS VANITY.

Ye sons of men with just regard attend,
Observe the Preacher, and believe the friend,
Whose serious Muse inspires him to explain
That all we act and all we think— is vain:
That in this pilgrimage of seventy years,
O'er rocks of perils and through vales of tears

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Destin'd to march, our doubtful steps we tend,
Tir'd with the toil, yet fearful of its end:
That from the womb we take our fatal shares
Of follies, passions, labours, tumults, cares;
And at approach of death shall only know [flow,
The truths which from these pensive numbers
That we pursue false joy and suffer real woe.

Happiness! object of that waking dream
Which we call Life, mistaking; fugitive theme
Of my pursuing verse: ideal shade,
Notional good: by fancy only made,
And by tradition nurs'd; fallacious fire,
Whose dancing beams mislead our fond desire:
Cause of our care, and error of our mind:
Oh! hadst thou ever been by Heaven design'd
To Adam, and his mortal race, the boon
Entire had been reserv'd for Solomon:
On me the partial lot had been bestow'd,
And in my cup the golden draught had flow'd.

But, O! ere yet original man was made,
Ere the foundations of this earth were laid,
It was opponent to our search ordain'd,
That joy, till sought, should never be attain'd:
This sad experience cites me to reveal,
And what I dictate is from what I feel.

Born as I was, great David's favourite son,
Dear to my people on the Hebrew throne,
Sublime my court with Ophir's treasures bless'd,
My name extended to the farthest East,
My body cloth'd with every outward grace,
Strength in my limbs, and beauty in my face,
My shining thought with fruitful notions crown'd.
Quick my invention, and my judgment sound:

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'Arise (I commun'd with myself) arise,
Think to be happy; to be great be wise;
Content of spirit must from science flow,
For 'tis a godlike attribute to know.'
I said, and sent my edict through the land;
Around my throne the letter'd rabbins stand:
Historic leaves revolve, long volumes spread,
The old discoursing as the younger read;
Attent I heard, propos'd my doubts, and said:
'The vegetable world, each plant and tree,
Its seed, its name, its nature, its degree,
I am allow'd, as Fame reports, to know,
From the fair cedar on the craggy brow
Of Lebanon, nodding supremely tall,
To creeping moss, and hyssop on the wall;
Yet just and conscious to myself I find
A thousand doubts oppose the searching mind.
'I know not why the beach delights the glade,
With boughs extended and a rounder shade,
Whilst touring firs in conic forms arise,
And with a pointed spear divide the skies;
Nor why, again, the changing oak should shed
The yearly honour of his stately head,
Whilst the distinguish'd yew is ever seen
Unchang'd his branch and permanent his green;
Wanting the sun why does the caltha fade?
Why does the cypress flourish in the shade?
The fig and date, why love they to remain
In middle station, and an even plain,
While in the lower marsh the gourd is found,
And while the hill with olive shade is crown'd?
Why does one climate and one soil endue
The blushing poppy with a crimson hue,
Yet leave the lily pale, and tinge the violet blue?

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Why does the fond carnation love to shoot
A various colour from one parent root;
While the fantastic tulip strives to break
In two-fold beauty and a parted streak!
The twining jasmine and the blushing rose,
With lavish grace, their morning scents disclose;
The smelling tuberose and jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an evening air.
Whence has the tree (resolve me) or the flower
A various instinct or a different power: [breath,
Why should one earth, one clime, one stream, one
Raise this to strength, and sicken that to death?
'Whence does it happen that the plant which well
We name the sensitive, should move and feel?
Whence know her leaves to answer her command,
And with quick horror fly the neighbouring hand?
'Along the sunny bank or watery mead,
Ten thousand stalks their various blossoms spread;
Peaceful and lowly, in their native soil,
They neither know to spin nor care to toil,
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our vile attire, and impotence of pride.
The cowslip smiles in brighter yellow dress'd,
Than that which veils the nubile virgin's breast;
A fairer red stands blushing in the rose,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestment flows.
Take but the humblest lily of the field,
And if our pride will to our reason yield,
It must by sure comparison be shown,
That on the regal seat great David's son,
Array'd in all his robes and types of power,
Shines with less glory than that simple flower.
'Of fishes next, my friends, I would inquire:
How the mute race engender or respire,

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From the small fry that glide on Jordan's stream
Unmark'd, a multitude without a name,
To that leviathan, who o'er the seas
Immense rolls onward his impetuous ways,
And mocks the wind, and in the tempest plays?
How they in warlike bands march greatly forth,
From freezing waters and the colder North,
To southern climes directing their career,
Their station changing with the' inverted year?
How all with careful knowledge are endued,
To choose their proper bed, and wave, and food;
To guard their spawn, and educate their brood?

'Of birds, how each, according to her kind,
Proper materials for her nest can find,
And build a frame which deepest thought in man
Would or amend or imitate in vain?
How in small flights they know to try their young,
And teach the callow child her parent's song?
Why these frequent the plain, and those the wood?
Why every land has her specific brood?
Where the tall crane or winding swallow goes,
Fearful of gathering winds and falling snows;
If into rocks or hollow trees they creep,
In temporary death confin'd to sleep,
Or, conscious of the coming evil, fly
To milder regions and a southern sky?

'Of beasts and creeping insects shall we trace
The wondrous nature and the various race;
Or wild or tame, or friend to man or foe,
Of us what they, or what of them, we know?

'Tell me, ye studious; who pretend to see
Far into Nature's bosom, whence the bee
Was first inform'd her ventrous flight to steer
Through tractless paths and an abyss of air?

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Whence she avoids the slimy marsh, and knows
The fertile hills, where sweeter herbage grows,
And honey-making flowers their opening buds disclose?
How, from the thicken'd mist and setting sun
Finds she the labour of her day is done?
Who taught her against winds and rains to strive,
To bring her burden to the certain hive;
And through the liquid fields again to pass
Duteous, and harkening to the sounding brass?
'And, O thou sluggard! tell me why the ant,
Midst summer's plenty thinks of winter's want,
By constant journies careful to prepare
Her stores, and bringing home the corny ear,
By what instruction does she bite the grain,
Lest hid in earth, and taking root again,
It might elude the foresight of her care?
Distinct in either insect's deed appear
The marks of thought, contrivance, hope, and fear.
'Fix thy corporeal and internal eye
On the young gnat or new-engender'd fly,
Or the vile worm, that yesterday began
To crawl, thy fellow-creatures, abject man! [see,
Like thee they breathe, they move, they taste, they
They show their passions, by their acts, like thee;
Darting their stings, they previously declare
Design'd revenge, and fierce intent of war:
Laying their eggs, they evidently prove
The genial power and full effect of love.
Each, then, has organs to digest his food,
One to beget, and one receive the brood:
Has limbs and sinews, blood, and heart and brain,
Life and her proper functions to sustain,
Through the whole fabric smaller than a grain.

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What more can our penurious reason grant
To the large whale or castled elephant?
To those enormous terrors of the Nile,
The crested snake and long-tail'd crocodile,
Than that all differ but in shape and name,
Each destin'd to a less or larger frame?

'For potent Nature loves a various act,
Prone to enlarge, or studious to contract;
Now forms her work too small, now too immense,
And scorns the measures of our feeble sense.
The object, spread too far, or rais'd too high,
Denies its real image to the eye;
Too little, it eludes the dazzled sight,
Becomes mix'd blackness or unparted light.
Water and air the varied form confound;
The straight looks crooked, and the square grows round.

'Thus while with fruitless hope and weary pain
We seek great Nature's power, but seek in vain,
Safe sits the goddess in her dark retreat,
Around her myriads of ideas wait,
And endless shapes, which the mysterious queen
Can take or quit, can alter or retain,
As from our lost pursuit she wills to hide
Her close decrees, and chasten human pride.

'Untam'd and fierce the tiger still remains;
He tires his life in biting on his chains:
For the kind gifts of water and of food
Ungrateful, and returning ill for good,
He seeks his keeper's flesh, and thirsts his blood:
While the strong camel and the generous horse,
Restrain'd and aw'd by man's inferior force,
Do to the rider's will their rage submit,
And answer to the spur, and own the bit;

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Stretch their glad mouths to meet the feeder's hand,
Pleas'd with his weight, and proud of his command.
'Again: the lonely fox roams far abroad,
On secret rapine bent and midnight fraud;
Now haunts the cliff, now traverses the lawn,
And flies the hated neighbourhood of man;
While the kind spaniel and the faithful hound,
Likest that fox in shape and species found,
Refuses through these cliffs and lawns to roam,
Pursues the noted path, and covets home;
Does with kind joy domestic faces meet,
Takes what the glutted child denies to eat,
And, dying, licks his long-lov'd master's feet.
'By what immediate cause they are inclin'd,
In many acts, 'tis hard, I own, to find.
I see in others, or I think I see,
That strict their principles and ours agree.
Evil, like us, they shun, and covet good,
Abhor the poison, and receive the food:
Like us they love or hate; like us they know
To joy the friend, or grapple with the foe.
With seeming thought their action they intend,
And use the means proportion'd to the end.
Then vainly the philosopher avers
That reason guides our deed, and instinct theirs.
How can we justly different causes frame,
When the effects entirely are the same?
Instinct and reason how can we divide?
'Tis the fool's ignorance and the pedant's pride.
'With the same folly, sure, man vaunts his sway,
If the brute beast refuses to obey.
For, tell me, when the empty boaster's word
Proclaims himself the universal lord,

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Does he not tremble lest the lion's paw
Should join his plea against the fancied law?
Would not the learned coward leave the chair,
If in the schools or porches should appear
The fierce hyæna or the foaming bear?

'The combatant too late the field declines,
When now the sword is girded to his loins.
When the swift vessel flies before the wind,
Too late the sailor views the land behind:
And 'tis too late now back again to bring
Inquiry, rais'd and towering on the wing;
Forward she strives, averse to be withheld
From nobler objects and a larger field.

'Consider with me this ethereal space,
Yielding to earth and sea the middle place:
Anxious I ask ye, how the pensile ball
Should never strive to rise, nor fear to fall?
When I reflect how the revolving sun
Does round our globe his crooked journies run,
I doubt of many lands if they contain
Or herd of beast or colony of man;
If any nation pass their destin'd days
Beneath the neighbouring sun's directer rays;
If any suffer, on the polar coast,
The rage of Arctos and eternal frost.

'May not the pleasure of Omnipotence
To each of these some secret good dispense?
Those who amidst the torrid regions live,
May they not gales unknown to us receive?
See daily showers rejoice the thirsty earth,
And bless the flowery buds' succeeding birth?
May they not pity us, condemn'd to bear
The various heaven of an obliquer sphere,

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While by fix'd laws, and with a just return,
They feel twelve hours that shade, for twelve that
burn,
And praise the neighbouring sun, whose constant
Enlightens them with seasons still the same? [flame
And may not those whose distant lot is cast
North beyond Tartary's extended waste,
Where through the plains of one continual day
Six shining months pursue their even way,
And six succeeding urge their dusky flight,
Obscur'd with vapours, and o'erwhelm'd in night;
May not, I ask, the natives of these climes
(As annals may inform succeeding times)
To our quotidian change of Heaven prefer
Their own vicissitude and equal share
Of day and night departed through the year?
May they not scorn our sun's repeated race,
To narrow bounds prescrib'd and little space,
Hastening from morn, and headlong driv'n from
Half of our daily toil yet scarcely done? [noon,
May they not justly to our climes upbraid
Shortness of night and penury of shade,
That ere our wearied limbs are justly bless'd
With wholesome sleep and necessary rest,
Another sun demands return of care,
The remnant toil of yesterday to bear?
Whilst, when the solar beams salute their sight,
Bold and secure in half a year of light,
Uninterrupted voyages they take
To the remotest wood and furthest lake,
Manage the fishing, and pursue the course [force
With more extended nerves and more continued
And when declining day forsakes their sky,
When gathering clouds speak gloomy winter nigh,

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With plenty for the coming season bless'd,
Six solid months (an age) they live, releas'd
From all the labour, process, clamour, woe,
Which our sad scenes of daily action know;
They light the shining lamp, prepare the feast,
And with full mirth receive the welcome guest,
Or tell their tender loves (the only care
Which now they suffer) to the listening fair,
And, rais'd in pleasure, or repos'd in ease,
(Grateful alternates of substantial peace)
They bless the long noctural influence shed
On the crown'd goblet and the genial bed.

'In foreign isles which our discoverers find,
Far from this length of continent disjoin'd,
The rugged bear's or spotted lynx's brood
Frighten the vallies, and infest the wood;
The hungry crocodile and hissing snake
Lurk in the troubled stream and fenny brake;
And man, untaught and ravenous as the beast,
Does valley, wood, and brake, and stream, infest;
Deriv'd these men and animals their birth
From trunk of oak, or pregnant womb of earth?
Whence then the old belief, that all began
In Eden's shade and one created man?
Or, grant this progeny was wafted o'er
By coasting boats from next adjacent shore, [spring,
Would those, from whom we will suppose they
Slaughter to harmless lands and poison bring?
Would they on board or bears or lynxes take,
Feed the she-adder and the brooding snake?
Or could they think the new-discover'd isle
Pleas'd to receive a pregnant crocodile?

'And since the savage lineage we must trace
From Noah sav'd, and his distinguish'd race,

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How should their fathers happen to forget
The arts which Noah taught, the rules he set,
To sow the glebe, to plant the generous vine,
And load with grateful flames the holy shrine?
While the great sire's unhappy sons are found,
Unpress'd their vintage, and untill'd their ground,
Straggling o'er dale and hill in quest of food,
And rude of arts, of virtue, and of God.

'How shall we next o'er earth and seas pursue
The varied forms of every thing we view;
That all is chang'd, though all is still the same,
Fluid the parts, yet durable the frame?
Of those materials which have been confess'd
The pristine springs and parents of the rest,
Each becomes other. Water stopp'd, gives birth
To grass and plants, and thickens into earth;
Diffus'd, it rises in a higher sphere,
Dilates its drops, and softens into air:
Those finer parts of air again aspire,
Move into warmth, and brighten into fire;
That fire once more, by thicker air o'ercome,
And downward forc'd, in earth's capacious womb
Alters its particles, is fire no more,
But lies resplendent dust and shining ore:
Or, running through the mighty Mother's veins,
Changes its shape, puts off its old remains;
With watery parts its lessen'd force divides,
Flows into waves, and rises into tides.

'Disparted streams shall from their channels fly,
And, deep surcharg'd, by sandy mountains lie
Obscurely sepulcher'd. By eating rain
And furious wind, down to the distant plain
The hill, that hides his head above the skies,
Shall fall: the plain, by slow degrees, shall rise

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Higher than erst had stood the summit hill;
For Time must Nature's great behest fulfil.
'Thus by a length of years and change of fate,
All things are light or heavy, small or great;
Thus Jordan's waves shall future clouds appear,
And Egypt's pyramids refine to air;
Thus later age shall ask for Pison's flood,
And travellers inquire where Babel stood.
'Now where we see these changes often fall,
Sedate we pass them by as natural;
Where to our eye more rarely they appear,
The pompous name of prodigy they bear:
Let active thought these close meanders trace,
Let human wit their dubious boundaries place.
Are all things miracle, or nothing such?
And prove we not too little, or too much!
'For that a branch cut off, a wither'd rod,
Should, at a word pronounc'd, revive and bud;
Is this more strange than that the mountain's brow,
Stripp'd by December's frost and white with snow,
Should push in spring ten thousand thousand buds,
And boast returning leaves and blooming woods?
That each successive night from opening Heaven
The food of angels should to man be given,
Is this more strange than that with common bread
Our fainting bodies every day are fed?
Than that each grain and seed, consum'd in earth,
Raises its store and multiplies its birth?
And from the handful which the tiller sows,
The labour'd fields rejoice, and future harvest flows?
'Then, from whate'er we can to sense produce
Common and plain, or wondrous and abstruse,
From Nature's constant or eccentric laws
The thoughtful soul this general influence draws
That an effect must presuppose a cause:

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And while she does her upward flight sustain,
Touching each link of the continued chain,
At length she is oblig'd and forc'd to see
A first, a source, a life, a deity;
What has for ever been, and must for ever be.

'This great existence thus by reason found,
Bless'd by all power, with all perfection crown'd,
How can we bind or limit his decree
By what our ear has heard, or eye may see?
Say, then, is all in heaps of water lost,
Beyond the islands and the midland coast?
Or has that God, who gave our world its birth,
Sever'd those waters by some other earth,
Countries by future ploughshares to be torn,
And cities rais'd by nations yet unborn!
Ere the progressive course of restless age
Performs three thousand times its annual stage,
May not our power and learning be suppress'd,
And arts and empire learn to travel west?

'Where, by the strength of this idea charm'd,
Lighten'd with glory, and with rapture warm'd
Ascends my soul? what sees she white and great
Amidst subjected seas? an isle, the seat
Of power and plenty, her imperial throne
For justice and for mercy sought and known;
Virtues sublime, great attributes of Heaven,
From thence to this distinguish'd nation given:
Yet farther west the western isle extends
Her happy fame; her armed fleets she sends
To climates folded yet from human eye,
And lands which we imagine wave and sky;
From pole to pole she hears her acts resound,
And rules an empire by no ocean bound;
Knows her ships anchor'd, and her sails unfurl'd,
In other Indies and a second world.

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'Long shall Britannia (that must be her name)
Be first in conquest, and preside in fame;
Long shall her favour'd monarchy engage
The teeth of Envy and the force of Age;
Rever'd and happy, she shall long remain
Of human things least changeable, least vain;
Yet all must with the general doom comply,
And this great glorious power, though last, must die.

'Now let us leave this earth, and lift our eye
To the large convex of yon azure sky:
Behold it like an ample curtain spread,
Now streak'd and glowing with the morning red;
Anon at noon in flaming yellow bright,
And choosing sable for the peaceful night.
Ask reason, now, whence light and shade were given,
And whence this great variety of Heaven?
Reason our guide, what can she more reply,
Than that the sun illuminates the sky?
Than that night rises from his absent ray,
And his returning lustre kindles day?

But we expect the morning red in vain,
'Tis hid in vapours, or obscur'd by rain:
The noontide yellow we in vain require,
'Tis black in storm, or red in lightning fire.
Pitchy and dark the night sometimes appears,
Friend to our woe, and parent of our fears,
Our joy and wonder sometimes she excites,
With stars unnumber'd and eternal lights.
Send forth, ye wise, send forth your labouring thought,
Let it return, with empty notions fraught
Of airy columns every moment broke,
Of circling whirlpools, and of spheres of smoke;
Yet this solution but once more affords
New change of terms, and scaffolding of words;

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In other garb my question I receive,
And take the doubt the very same I gave.
'Lo! as a giant strong the lusty Sun
Multiplied rounds in one great round does run;
Twofold his course, yet constant his career,
Changing the day, and finishing the year:
Again, when his descending orb retires,
And earth perceives the absence of his fires,
The moon affords us her alternate ray,
And with kind beams distributes fainter day,
Yet keeps the stages of her monthly race,
Various her beams, and changeable her face;
Each planet shining in his proper sphere,
Does with just speed his radiant voyage steer;
Each sees his lamp with different lustre crown'd;
Each knows his course with different periods bound,
And in his passage through the liquid space,
Nor hastens nor retards his neighbour's race.
How shine these planets with substantial rays?
Does innate lustre gild their measur'd days?
Or do they (as your schemes, I think, have shown)
Dart furtive beams and glory not their own,
All servants to that source of light, the sun?
'Again; I see ten thousand thousand stars,
Nor cast in lines, in circles, nor in squares,
(Poor rules, with which our bounded mind is fill'd
When we would plant, or cultivate, or build)
But shining with such vast, such various light,
As speaks the hand that form'd them infinite.
How mean the order and perfection sought
In the best product of the human thought,
Compar'd to the great harmony that reigns
In what the Spirit of the world ordains!

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'Now if the sun to earth transmits his ray,
Yet does not scorch us with too fierce a day,
How small a portion of his power is given
To orbs more distant, and remoter heaven?
And of those stars which our imperfect eye
Has doom'd and fix'd to one eternal sky,
Each by a native stock of honour great,
May dart strong influence, and diffuse kind heat,
Itself a sun, and with transmissive light
Enliven worlds denied to human sight;
Around the circles of their ambient skies
New moons may grow or wane, may set or rise,
And other stars may to those suns be earths,
Give their own elements their proper births,
Divide their climes, or elevate their pole,
See their lands flourish, and their oceans roll;
Yet these great orbs, thus radically bright,
Primitive fonts and origins of light,
Lay each to other (as their different sphere
Makes or their distance or their height appear)
Be seen a nobler or inferior star,
And in that space which we call air and sky,
Myriads of earths, and moons, and suns, may lie
Unmeasur'd and unknown by human eye.

'In vain we measure this amazing sphere,
And find and fix its centre here or there,
Whilst its circumference, scorning to be brought
Even into fancied space, illudes our vanquish'd thought.

'Where, then, are all the radiant monsters driven,
With which your guesses fill'd the frighten'd Heaven
Where will their fictious images remain?
In paper schemes, and the Chaldean's brain?

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'This problem yet, this offspring of a guess,
Let us for once a child of Truth confess;
That these fair stars, these objects of delight
And terror to our searching dazzled sight,
Are worlds immense, unnumber'd, infinite;
But do these worlds display their beams, or guide
Their orbs, to serve thy use, to please thy pride?
Thyself but dust, thy stature but a span,
A moment thy duration, foolish man!
As well may the minutest emmet say
That Caucasus was rais'd to pave his way;
The snail, that Lebanon's extended wood
Was destin'd only for his walk and food;
The vilest cockle, gaping on the coast
That rounds the ample seas, as well may boast
The craggy rock projects above the sky,
That he in safety at its foot may lie;
And the whole ocean's confluent waters swell,
Only to quench his thirst, or move and blanch his shell.

'A higher flight the ventrous goddess tries,
Leaving material worlds and local skies;
Inquires what are the beings, where the space,
That form'd and held the angel's ancient race?
For rebel Lucifer with Michael sought
(I offer only what tradition taught)
Embattled cherub against cherub rose,
Did shield to shield, and power to power oppose;
Heaven rung with triumph, hell was fill'd with woes.
What were these forms, of which your volumes tell
How some fought great, and others recreant fell?
These bound to bear an everlasting load,
Durance of chain, and banishment of God;

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By fatal turns their wretched strength to tire,
To swim in sulphurous lakes, or land on solid fire;
While those, exalted to primeval light,
Excess of blessing, and supreme delight,
Only perceive some little pause of joys,
In those great moments when their God employs
Their ministry, to pour his threaten'd hate
On the proud king, or the rebellious state;
Or to reverse Jehovah's high command,
And speak the thunder falling from his hand,
When to his duty the proud king returns,
And the rebellious state in ashes mourns?
How can good angels be in Heaven confin'd,
Or view that Presence which no space can bind?
Is God above, beneath, or you, or here?
He who made all, is he not every where?
Oh! how can wicked angels find a night
So dark to hide them from that piercing light,
Which form'd the eye, and gave the power of sight?

'What mean I now of angel, when I hear
Firm body, spirit pure, or fluid air?
Spirits, to action spiritual confin'd,
Friends to our thought, and kindred to our mind,
Should only act and prompt us from within,
Nor by external eye be ever seen.
Was it not therefore to our fathers known
That these had appetite, and limb, and bone?
Else how could Abram wash their wearied feet,
Or Sarah please their taste with savoury meat?
Whence should they fear? or why did Lot engage
To save their bodies from abusive rage?
And how could Jacob, in a real fight,
Feel or resist the wrestling angel's might?

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How could a form its strength with matter try?
Or how a spirit touch a mortal's thigh?
'Now are they air condens'd, or gather'd rays?
How guide they then our prayer, or keep our ways,
By stronger blasts still subject to be tost,
By tempests scatter'd, and in whirlwinds lost?
'Have they, again, (as sacred song proclaims)
Substances real, and existing frames?
How comes it, since with them we jointly share
The great effect of one Creator's care,
That whilst our bodies sicken and decay,
Theirs are for ever healthy, young, and gay?
Why, whilst we struggle in this vale beneath,
With want and sorrow, with disease and death,
Do they more bless'd perpetual life employ,
On songs of pleasure, and in scenes of joy?
'Now, when my mind has all this world survey'd,
And found that nothing by itself was made;
When thought has rais'd itself by just degrees,[trees,
From vallies crown'd with flowers, and hills with
From smoking minerals, and from rising streams,
From fattening Nilus, or victorious Thames;
From all the living that four-footed move
Along the shore, the meadow, or the grove;
From all that can with fins or feathers fly
Through the aërial or the watery sky;
From the poor reptile with a reasoning soul,
That miserable master of the whole;
From this great object of the body's eye,
This fair half-round, this ample azure sky,
Terribly large, and wonderfully bright,
With stars unnumber'd, and unmeasur'd light;
From essences unseen, celestial names,
Enlightening spirits, ministerial flames,

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Angels, dominions, potentates, and thrones,
All that in each degree the name of creature owns;
Lift we our reason to that sovereign Cause
Who bless'd the whole with life, and bounded it
with laws;
Who forth from nothing call'd this comely frame,
His will and act, his word and work the same;
To whom a thousand years are but a day;
Who bade the Light her genial beams display,
And set the Moon, and taught the Sun his way;
Who waking Time, his creature, from the source
Primeval, order'd his predestin'd course,
Himself, as in the hollow of his hand,
Holding, obedient to his high command,
The deep abyss, the long-continued store, [pour
Where months, and days, and hours, and minutes,
Their floating parts, and thenceforth are no more:
This Alpha and Omega, First and Last,
Who, like the potter, in a mould has cast
The world's great frame, commanding it to be
Such as the eyes of sense and reason see,
Yet if he wills may change or spoil the whole,
May take yon beauteous, mystic, starry roll,
And burn it like an useless parchment scroll;
May from its basis in one moment pour
This melted earth—
Like liquid metal, and like burning ore;
Who, sole in power, at the beginning said,
'Let sea, and air, and earth, and Heaven, be made!'
And it was so—And when he shall ordain
In other sort, has but to speak again,
And they shall be no more: of this great theme,
This glorious, hallow'd, everlasting Name,
This God, I would discourse'—

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The learned elders sat appall'd, amaz'd,
And each with mutual look on other gaz'd;
Nor speech they meditate, nor answer frame;
Too plain, alas! their silence spake their shame;
Till one, in whom an outward mien appear'd
And turn superior to the vulgar herd,
Began: 'That human learning's furthest reach
Was but to note the doctrines I could teach;
That mine to speak, and theirs was to obey,
For I in knowledge more than power did sway,
And the astonish'd world in me beheld
Moses eclips'd, and Jesse's son excell'd.'
Humble a second bow'd, and took the word,
Foresaw my name by future age ador'd;
'O live (said he) thou wisest of the wise;
As none has equall'd, none shall ever rise
Excelling thee'—
Parent of wicked, bane of honest deeds,
Pernicious Flattery! thy malignant seeds
In an ill hour, and by a fatal hand,
Sadly diffus'd o'er Virtue's gleby land,
With rising pride amidst the corn appear,
And choke the hopes and harvest of the year.
And now the whole perplex'd ignoble crowd,
Mute to my questions, in my praises loud,
Echo'd the word: whence things arose, or how
They thus exist, the aptest nothing know:
What yet is not, but is ordain'd to be,
All veil of doubt apart, the dullest see.
My prophets and my sophists finish'd here
Their civil efforts of the verbal war:
Not so my rabbins and logicians yield;
Retiring, still they combat: from the field
Of open arms unwilling they depart,
And sculk behind the subterfuge of art.

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To speak one thing mix'd dialects they join,
Divide the simple, and the plain define;
Fix fancied laws, and form imagin'd rules,
Terms of their art, and jargon of their schools,
Ill-grounded maxims, by false gloss enlarg'd,
And captious science against reason charg'd.'
Soon their crude notions with each other fought;
The adverse sect denied what this had taught;
And he at length the amplest triumph gain'd,
Who contradicted what the last maintain'd.
O wretched impotence of human mind!
We, erring, still excuse for error find,
And darkling grope, not knowing we are blind.
Vain man! since first the blushing sire essay'd
His folly with connected leaves to shade,
How does the crime of thy resembling race,
With like attempt, that pristine error trace?
Too plain thy nakedness of soul espied,
Why dost thou strive the conscious shame to hide,
By masks of eloquence and veils of pride?
With outward smiles their flattery I receiv'd,
Own'd my sick mind by their discourse reliev'd;
But bent, and inward to myself, again
Perplex'd, these matters I revolv'd in vain.
My search still tir'd, my labour still renew'd,
At length I ignorance and knowledge view'd
Impartial; both in equal balance laid,
Light flew the knowing scale, the doubtful heavy [weigh'd.
Forc'd by reflective reason, I confess
That human science is uncertain guess.
Alas! we grasp at clouds, and beat the air,
Vexing that spirit we intend to clear.
Can thought beyond the bounds of matter climb?
Or who shall tell me what is space or time?

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In vain we lift up our presumptuous eyes
To what our Maker to their ken denies:
The searcher follows fast, the object faster flies.
The little which imperfectly we find,
Seduces only the bewilder'd mind
To fruitless search of something yet behind.
Various discussions tear our heated brain:
Opinions often turn; still doubts remain;
And who indulges thought increases pain.
How narrow limits were to wisdom given!
Earth she surveys; she thence would measure Heaven:
Through mists obscure, now wings her tedious way,
Now wanders, dazzled with too bright a day,
And from the summit of a pathless coast
Sees infinite; and in that sight is lost.
Remember that the curs'd desire to know,
Offspring of Adam, was thy source of woe;
Why wilt thou, then, renew the vain pursuit,
And rashly catch at the forbidden fruit?
With empty labour and eluded strife
Seeking, by knowledge, to attain to life;
For ever from that fatal tree debar'd,
Which flaming swords and angry cherubs guard.

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PLEASURE.

BOOK II.

TEXTS CHIEFLY ALLUDED TO IN THIS BOOK.

I SAID in mine heart, 'Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure.' Eccles. chap. ii. ver. 1.

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards, ver. 4.

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits, ver. 5.

I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees, ver. 6.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun, ver. 11.

I gat me men-singers, and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts, ver. 8.

I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom) and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was

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that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven, all the days of their life, ver. 3.

Then said I in my heart, 'As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me: and why was I then more wise?' Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. Eccles. chap. ii. ver. 15.

Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me, chap. ii. ver. 17.

Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour, chap. x. ver. 1.

The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot. Prov. chap. x. ver. 7.

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PLEASURE.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Solomon, again seeking happiness, inquires if wealth and greatness can produce it; begins with the magnificence of gardens and buildings; the luxury of music and feasting; and proceeds to the hopes and desires of love. In two episodes are shown the follies and troubles of that passion. Solomon, still disappointed, falls under the temptations of libertinism and idolatry; recovers his thought; reasons aright; and concludes that, as to the pursuit of pleasure and sensual delight, ALL IS VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT.

Try then, O man, the moments to deceive
That from the womb attend thee to the grave:
For wearied Nature find some apter scheme;
Health be thy hope, and pleasure be thy theme:
From the perplexing and unequal ways
Where study brings thee; from the endless maze
Which doubt persuades to run, forewarn'd, recede
To the gay field and flowery path, that lead
To jocund mirth, soft joy, and careless ease:
Forsake what may instruct, for what may please:
Essay amusing art and proud expense,
And make thy reason subject to thy sense.

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I commun'd thus: the power of wealth I tried,
And all the various luxe of costly pride;
Artists and plans reliev'd my solemn hours;
I founded palaces and planted bow'rs.
Birds, fishes, beasts, of each exotic kind
I to the limits of my court confin'd.
To trees transfer'd I gave a second birth,
And bid a foreign shade grace Judah's earth.
Fish-ponds were made where former forests grew,
And hills were levell'd to extend the view.
Rivers, diverted from their native course,
And bound with chains of artificial force,
From large cascades in pleasing tumult roll'd,
Or rose through figur'd stone or breathing gold.
From furthest Africa's tormented womb
The marble brought, erects the spacious dome,
Or forms the pillars' long-extended rows, [grows.
On which the planted grove and pensile garden
The workmen here obey the master's call
To gild the turret, and to paint the wall;
To mark the pavement there with various stone,
And on the jasper steps to rear the throne:
The spreading cedar, that an age had stood,
Supreme of trees, and mistress of the wood,
Cut down and carv'd, my shining roof adorns,
And Lebanon his ruin'd honour mourns.
A thousand artists show their cunning pow'r
To raise the wonders of the ivory tow'r:
A thousand maidens ply the purple loom
To weave the bed, and deck the regal room;
Till Tyre confesses her exhausted store,
That on her coast the murex* is no more;

* The murex is a shell-fish, of the liquor whereof a purple colour is made.

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Till from the Parian isle and Libya's coast
The mountains grieve their hopes of marble lost;
And India's woods return their just complaint,
Their brood decay'd, and want of elephant.
My full design, with vast expense achiev'd,
I came, beheld, admir'd—reflected, griev'd;
I chid the folly of my thoughtless haste,
For, the work perfected, the joy was past.
To my new courts sad Thought did still repair,
And round my gilded roofs hung hovering Care.
In vain on silken beds I sought repose,
And restless oft from purple couches rose;
Vexatious Thought still found my flying mind
Nor bound by limits, nor to place confin'd;
Haunted my nights, and terrified my days,
Stalk'd through my gardens and pursued my ways,
Nor shut from artful bower, nor lost in winding maze.
Yet take thy bent, my soul; another sense
Indulge; add music to magnificence:
Essay if harmony may grief control,
Or power of sound prevail upon the soul.
Often our seers and poets have confess'd
That music's force can tame the furious beast;
Can make the wolf or foaming boar restrain
His rage, the lion drop his crested mane,
Attentive to the song; the lynx forget
His wrath to man, and lick the minstrel's feet.
Are we, alas! less savage yet than these?
Else music, sure, may human cares appease.
I spake my purpose, and the cheerful choir
Parted their shares of harmony: the lyre
Soften'd the timbrel's noise; the trumpet's sound
Provok'd the Dorian flute (both sweeter found

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When mix'd) the fife the viol's notes refin'd,
And every strength with every grace was join'd:
Each morn they wak'd me with a sprightly lay;
Of opening Heaven they sung, and gladsome day:
Each evening their repeated skill express'd
Scenes of repose and images of rest:
Yet still in vain; for music gather'd thought;
But how unequal the effects it brought!
The soft ideas of the cheerful note,
Lightly receiv'd, were easily forgot;
The solemn violence of the graver sound
Knew to strike deep, and leave a lasting wound.
And now reflecting, I with grief descry
The sickly lust of the fantastic eye;
How the weak organ is with seeing cloy'd,
Plying ere night what it at noon enjoy'd.
And now (unhappy search of thought!) I found
The fickle ear soon glutted with the sound,
Condemn'd eternal changes to pursue,
Tir'd with the last, and eager of the new.
I bade the virgins and the youth advance,
To temper music with the sprightly dance.
In vain! too low the mimic motions seem;
What takes our heart must merit our esteem.
Nature, I thought, perform'd too mean a part,
Forming her movements to the rules of art;
And, vex'd, I found that the musician's hand
Had o'er the dancer's mind too great command.
I drank; I lik'd it not: 'twas rage; 'twas noise;
An airy scene of transitory joys.
In vain I trusted that the flowing bowl
Would banish sorrow and enlarge the soul.
To the late revel and protracted feast
Wild dreams succeeded, and disorder'd rest;

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And as at dawn of morn fair reason's light
Broke through the fumes and phantoms of the night,
What had been said, I ask'd my soul, what done?
How flow'd our mirth, and whence the source begun?
Perhaps the jest that charm'd the sprightly crowd,
And made the jovial table laugh so loud,
To some false notion ow'd its poor pretence,
To an ambiguous word's perverted sense,
To a wild sonnet, or a wanton air,
Offence and torture to the sober ear.
Perhaps, alas! the pleasing stream was brought
From this man's error, from another's fault;
From topics which good-nature would forget,
And prudence mention with the last regret,
  Add yet unnumber'd ills that lie unseen
In the pernicious draught; the word obscene,
Or harsh, which once elanc'd must ever fly
Irrevocable; the too prompt reply,
Seed of severe distrust and fierce debate,
What we should shun, and what we ought to hate.
  Add, too, the blood impoverish'd, and the course
Of health suppress'd by wine's continued force.
  Unhappy man! whom sorrow thus and rage
To different ills alternately engage;
Who drinks, alas! but to forget; nor sees
That melancholy sloth, severe disease,
Memory confus'd, and interrupted thought,
Death's harbingers, lie latent in the draught;
And in the flowers that wreath the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and poisonous serpents roll.
  Remains there aught untried that may remove
Sickness of mind, and heal the bosom?—Love!
Love yet remains; indulge the genial fire,
Cherish fair hope, solicit young desire,

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And boldly bid thy anxious soul explore
This last great remedy's mysterious pow'r.
Why, therefore, hesitates my doubtful breast?
Why ceases it one moment to be bless'd?
'Fly swift, my friends; my servants, fly; employ
Your instant pains to bring your master joy.
Let all my wives and concubines be dress'd;
Let them to-night attend the royal feast;
All Israel's beauty, all the foreign fair,
The gifts of princes or the spoils of war:
Before their monarch they shall singly pass,
And the most worthy shall obtain the grace.'
I said: the feast was serv'd; the bowl was crown'd;
To the King's pleasure went the mirthful round.
The women came: as custom wills, they pass'd:
On one (O that distinguish'd one!) I cast
The favourite glance! O! yet my mind retains
That fond beginning of my infant pains.
Mature the virgin was, of Egypt's race,
Grace shap'd her limbs, and beauty deck'd her face:
Easy her motion seem'd, serene her air;
Full, though unzon'd, her bosom rose: her hair
Untied, and ignorant of artful aid,
Adown her shoulders loosely lay display'd,
And in the jetty curls ten thousand Cupids play'd.
Fix'd on her charms, and pleas'd that I could love,
'Aid me, my friends, contribute to improve
Your monarch's bliss, (I said:) fresh roses bring
To strow my bed, till the impoverish'd Spring
Confess her want: around my amorous head
Be dropping myrrh and liquid amber shed
Till Arab has no more; from the soft lyre,
Sweet flute, and ten-string'd instrument, require

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Sounds of delight: and thou, fair Nymph, draw nigh,
Thou in whose graceful form and potent eye
Thy master's joy, long sought, at length is found,
And, as thy brow, let my desires be crown'd.
O favourite Virgin, that has warm'd the breast
Whose sovereign dictates subjugate the East!'
I said; and sudden from the golden throne,
With a submissive step, I hasted down.
The glowing garland from my hair I took,
Love in my heart, obedience in my look,
Prepar'd to place it on her comely head,
'O favourite Virgin! (yet again I said)
Receive the honours destin'd to thy brow;
And O, above thy fellows, happy thou!
Their duty must thy sovereign word obey.
Rise up, my love, my fair one, come away.'
What pang, alas! what ecstasy of smart
Tore up my senses and transfix'd my heart,
When she, with modest scorn, the wreath return'd,
Reclin'd her beauteous neck, and inward mourn'd!
Forc'd by my pride, I my concern suppress'd,
Pretended drowsiness, and wish of rest;
And, sullen, I forsook the' imperfect feast;
Ordering the eunuchs, to whose proper care
Our Eastern grandeur gives the' imprisón'd fair,
To lead her forth to a distinguish'd bow'r,
And bid her dress the bed, and wait the hour.
Restless I follow'd this obdurate maid,
(Swift are the steps that Love and Anger tread)
Approach'd her person, courted her embrace,
Renew'd my flame, repeated my disgrace:
By turns put on the suppliant and the lord;
Threaten'd this moment, and the next implor'd,

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Offer'd again the unaccepted wreath,
And choice of happy love, or instant death.
  Averse to all her amorous king desir'd,
Far as she might she decently retir'd,
And darting scorn and sorrow from her eyes,
'What means (said she) King Solomon the wise?
This wretched body trembles at your pow'r;
Thus far could Fortune, but she can no more.
Free to herself my potent mind remains,
Nor fears the victor's rage, nor feels his chains.
  'Tis said that thou canst plausibly dispute,
Supreme of seers, of angel, man, and brute;
Canst plead, with subtle wit and fair discourse,
Of passion's folly and of reason's force;
That to the tribes attentive, thou canst know
When their misfortunes or their blessings flow:
That thou in science as in power art great,
And truth and honour on thy edicts wait.
Where is that knowledge now, that regal thought,
With just advice and timely council fraught?
Where now, O Judge of Israel, does it rove?—
What in one moment dost thou offer? Love—
Love? why, 'tis joy or sorrow, peace or strife;
'Tis all the colour of remaining life,
And human misery must begin or end
As he becomes a tyrant or a friend.
Would David's son, religious, just, and grave,
To the first bride-bed of the world receive
A foreigner, a heathen and a slave?
Or, grant thy passion has these names destroy'd,
That Love, like Death, makes all distinctions void,
Yet in his empire o'er thy abject breast,
His flames and torments only are express'd,

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His rage can in my smiles alone relent,
And all his joys solicit my consent.
'Soft love, spontaneous tree, its parted root
Must from two hearts with equal vigour shoot,
Whilst each delighted, and delighting, gives
The pleasing ecstasy which each receives:
Cherish'd with hope, and fed with joy, it grows,
Its cheerful buds their opening bloom disclose,
And round the happy soil diffusive odour flows.
If angry fate that mutual care denies,
The fading plant bewails its due supplies:
Wild with despair, or sick with grief, it dies.
'By force beasts act, and are by force restrain'd:
The human mind by gentle means is gain'd.
Thy useless strength, mistaken King, employ:
Sated with rage, and ignorant of joy,
Thou shalt not gain what I deny to yield,
Nor reap the harvest, though thou spoil'st the field.
Know, Solomon, thy poor extent of sway;
Contract thy brow, and Israel shall obey;
But wilful Love thou must with smiles appease,
Approach his awful throne by just degrees,
And, if thou wouldst be happy, learn to please.
'Not that those arts can here successful prove,
For I am destin'd to another's love.
Beyond the cruel bounds of thy command,
To my dear equal, in my native land,
My plighted vow I gave; I his receiv'd:
Each swore with truth, with pleasure each believ'd:
The mutual contract was to heaven convey'd;
In equal scales the busy angels weigh'd
Its solemn force, and clapp'd their wings and spread
The lasting roll, recording what we said.

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'Now in my heart behold thy poniard stain'd:
Take the sad life which I have long disdain'd;
End, in a dying virgin's wretched fate,
Thy ill-star'd passion and my stedfast hate:
For long as blood informs these circling veins,
Or fleeting breath its latest pow'r retains,
Hear me to Egypt's vengeful gods declare
Hate is my part; be thine, O King, despair.
'Now strike, (she said, and open'd bare her [breast)
Stand it in Judah's Chronicles confess'd,
That David's son, by impious passion mov'd,
Smote a she-slave, and murder'd what he lov'd.'
Asham'd, confus'd, I started from the bed,
And to my soul, yet uncollected, said,
'Into thyself, fond Solomon, return;
Reflect again, and thou again shalt mourn. [sought,
When I through number'd years have pleasure
And in vain hope the wanton phantom caught,
To mock my sense and mortify my pride,
'Tis in another's power, and is denied.
Am I a king, great Heaven! does life or death
Hang on the wrath or mercy of my breath,
While kneeling I my servant's smiles implore,
And one mad damsel dares dispute my pow'r?
To ravish her? that thought was soon depress'd,
Which must debase the monarch to the beast.
To send her back? O whither, and to whom?
To lands where Solomon must never come?
To that insulting rival's happy arms
For whom, disdaining me, she keeps her charms?
Fantastic tyrant of the amorous heart,
How hard thy yoke! how cruel is thy dart!
Those 'scape thy anger who refuse thy sway,
And those are punished most, who most obey.

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See Judah's king revere thy greater pow'r;
What canst thou covet, or how triumph more?
Why then, O Love, with an obdurate ear
Does this proud nymph reject a monarch's pray'r?
Why to some simple shepherd does she run,
From the fond arms of David's favourite son?
Why flies she from the glories of a court,
Where wealth and pleasure may thy reign support,
To some poor cottage on the mountain's brow,
Now bleak with winds, and covered now with snow,
Where pinching want must curb her warm desires,
And household cares suppress thy genial fires?
  Too aptly the afflicted heathens prove
The force, while they erect the shrines of Love.
His mystic form the artizans of Greece
In wounded stone or molten gold express;
And Cyprus to his godhead pays her vow,
Fast in his hand the idol holds his bow;
A quiver by his side sustains his store
Of pointed darts, sad emblems of his pow'r;
A pair of wings he has, which he extends
Now to be gone, which now again he bends,
Prone to return, as best may serve his wanton ends.
Entirely thus I find the fiend pourtray'd,
Since first, alas! I saw the beauteous maid;
I felt him strike, and now I see him fly:
Curs'd demon: O! for ever broken lie
Those fatal shafts by which I inward bleed!
O! can my wishes yet o'ertake thy speed!
Tir'd may'st thou pant, and hang thy flagging wing,
Except thou turn'st thy course, resolv'd to bring
The damsel back, and save the love-sick king.

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My soul thus struggling in the fatal net,
Unable to enjoy or to forget,
I reason'd much, alas! but more I lov'd,
Sent and recall'd, ordain'd and disapprov'd,
Till, hopeless, plung'd in an abyss of grief,
I from necessity receiv'd relief;
Time gently aided to assuage my pain,
And Wisdom took once more the slacken'd rein.
But O how short my interval of woe!
Our griefs how swift, our remedies how slow!
Another nymph (for so did Heaven ordain,
To change the manner, but renew the pain)
Another nymph, amongst the many fair
That made my softer hours their solemn care,
Before the rest affected still to stand,
And watch'd my eye, preventing my command.
Abra, she so was call'd, did soonest haste
To grace my presence; Abra went the last:
Abra was ready ere I call'd her name,
And though I call'd another, Abra came.
Her equals first observ'd her growing zeal,
And laughing gloss'd, that Abra serv'd so well.
To me her actions did unheeded die,
Or were remark'd but with a common eye,
Till more appriz'd of what the rumour said,
More I observ'd peculiar in the maid.
The sun declin'd had shot his western ray,
When, tir'd with business of the solemn day,
I purpos'd to unbend the evening hours,
And banquet private in the women's bowers.
I call'd before I sat to wash my hands,
For so the precept of the law commands:
Love had ordain'd that it was Abra's turn
To mix the sweets and minister the urn.

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With awful homage and submissive dread
The maid approach'd, on my declining head
To pour the oils: she trembled as she pour'd;
With an unguarded look she now devour'd
My nearer face: and now recall'd her eye,
And heav'd, and strove to hide a sudden sigh.
'And when (said I) canst thou have dread or pain?
What can thy imagery of sorrow mean?
Secluded from the world and all its care,
Hast thou to grieve or joy, to hope or fear?
For sure, I added, sure thy little heart
Ne'er felt Love's anger, or receiv'd his dart.'
Abash'd she blush'd, and with disorder spoke;
Her rising shame adorn'd the words it broke.
'If the great master will descend to hear
The humble series of his handmaid's care,
O! while she tells it, let him not put on
The look that awes the nations from the throne:
O! let not death severe in glory lie
In the King's frown, and terror of his eye.
'Mine to obey, thy part is to ordain;
And though to mention be to suffer pain,
If the King smiles whilst I my woe recite,
If weeping I find favour in his sight,
Flow fast my tears, full rising his delight.
'O! witness earth beneath and heaven above,
For can I hide it? I am sick of love;
If madness may the name of passion bear,
Or love be call'd what is indeed despair.
'Thou sovereign Power, whose secret will controls
The inward bent and motion of our souls!
Why hast thou plac'd such infinite degrees
Between the cause and cure of my disease?

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The mighty object of that raging fire
In which unpitied Abra must expire,
Had he been born some simple shepherd's heir,
The lowing herd or fleecy sheep his care,
At morn with him I o'er the hills had run,
Scornful of winter's frost and summer's sun,
Still asking where he made his flock to rest at noon.
For him at night, the dear expected guest,
I had with hasty joy prepar'd the feast,
And from the cottage, o'er the distant plain,
Sent forth my longing eye to meet the swain,
Waving, impatient, toss'd by hope and fear,
Till he and joy together should appear,
And the lov'd dog declare his master near.
On my declining neck and open breast
I should have lull'd the lovely youth to rest,
And from beneath his head at dawning day,
With softest care, have stol'n my arm away,
To rise and from the fold release the sheep,
Fond of his flock, indulgent to his sleep.

'Or if kind Heaven, propitious to my flame,
(For sure from Heaven the faithful ardour came)
Had bless'd my life, and deck'd my natal hour
With height of title and extent of pow'r,
Without a crime my passion had aspir'd,
Found the lov'd prince, and told what I desir'd.

'Then I had come, preventing Sheba's queen,
To see the comeliest of the sons of men;
To hear the charming poet's amorous song,
And gather honey, falling from his tongue;
To take the fragrant kisses of his mouth,
Sweeter than breezes of her native south,

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Likening his grace, his person, and his mien,
To all that great or beauteous I had seen.
Serene and bright his eyes, as solar beams
Reflecting temper'd light from crystal streams;
Ruddy as gold his cheek; his bosom fair
As silver; the curl'd ringlets of his hair
Black as the raven's wing; his lip more red
Than eastern coral or the scarlet thread;
Even his teeth, and white like a young flock,
Coëval, newly shorn, from the clear brook
Recent, and blanching on the sunny rock.
Ivory with sapphires intersper'd, explains
How white his hands, how blue the manly veins;
Columns of polish'd marble, firmly set
On golden bases are his legs and feet;
His stature all majestic, all divine,
Straight as the palm-tree, strong as is the pine;
Saffron and myrrh are on his garments shed,
And everlasting sweets blòom round his head.
What utter I? where am I? wretched maid!
Die, Abra, die; too plainly hast thou said
Thy soul's desire to meet his high embrace,
And blessing stamp'd upon thy future race;
To bid attentive nations bless thy womb,
With unborn monarchs charg'd, and Solomons to come.'

Here o'er her speech her flowing eyes prevail:
'O foolish maid! and, O unhappy tale!
My suffering heart for ever shall defy
New wounds and danger from a future eye.
O! yet my tortur'd senses deep retain
The wretched memory of my former pain,
The dire affront, and my Egyptian chain.'

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'As time, I said, may happily efface
That cruel image of the King's disgrace,
Imperial reason shall resume her seat,
And Solomon, once fall'n, again be great.
Betray'd by passion, as subdued in war,
We wisely should exert a double care,
Nor ever ought a second time to err.'

This Abra then——
I saw her; 'twas humanity; it gave
Some respite to the sorrows of my slave.
Her fond excess proclaim'd her passion true,
And generous pity to that truth was due.
Well I entreated her who well deserv'd;
I call'd her often, for she always serv'd:
Use made her person easy to my sight,
And ease insensibly produc'd delight.

Whene'er I revell'd in the women's bow'rs,
(For first I sought her but at looser hours)
The apples she had gather'd smelt most sweet,
The cake she kneaded was the savoury meat;
But fruits their odour lost, and meats their taste,
If gentle Abra had not deck'd the feast:
Dishonour'd did the sparkling goblet stand,
Unless receiv'd from gentle Abra's hand;
And when the virgins form'd the evening choir,
Raising their voices to the master-lyre,
Too flat I thought this voice, and that too shrill;
One show'd too much, and one too little skill;
Nor could my soul approve the music's tone,
Till all was hush'd, and Abra sung alone.
Fairer she seem'd distinguish'd from the rest,
And better mein disclos'd, as better dress'd;
A bright tiara round her forehead tied,
To juster bounds confin'd its rising pride;

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The blushing ruby on her snowy breast
Render'd its panting whiteness more confess'd;
Bracelets of pearl gave roundness to her arm,
And every gem augmented every charm:
Her senses pleas'd, her beauty still improv'd,
And she more lovely grew as more belov'd.
  And now I could behold, avow, and blame,
The several follies of my former flame,
Willing my heart for recompense to prove
The certain joys that lie in prosperous love.
'For what, (said I) from Abra can I fear,
Too humble to insult, too soft to be severe?
The damsel's sole ambition is to please;
With freedom I may like, and quit with ease:
She soothes, but never can enthral my mind:
Why may not peace and love for once be join'd?'
  Great Heav'n! how frail thy creature man is made!
How by himself insensibly betray'd!
In our own strength unhappily secure,
Too little cautious of the adverse pow'r,
And by the blast of self-opinion mov'd,
We wish to charm, and seek to be belov'd.
On pleasure's flowing brink we idly stray,
Masters as yet of our returning way;
Seeing no danger, we disarm our mind,
And give our conduct to the waves and wind;
Then in the flowery mead or verdant shade
To wanton dalliance negligently laid,
We weave the chaplet and we crown the bowl,
And smiling see the nearer waters roll,
Till the strong gusts of raging passion rise,
Till the dire tempest mingles earth and skies,
And swift into the boundless ocean borne,
Our foolish confidence too late we mourn;

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Round our devoted heads the billows beat, [treat.
And from our troubled view the lessen'd lands re-
O mighty Love! from thy unbounded pow'r
How shall the human bosom rest secure?
How shall our thought avoid the various snare,
Or wisdom to our caution'd soul declare
The different shapes thou pleasest to employ,
When bent to hurt, and certain to destroy?
The haughty nymph, in open beauty dress'd,
To-day encounters our unguarded breast;
She looks with majesty, and moves with state:
Unbent her soul, and in misfortune great,
She scorns the world, and dares the rage of Fate.
Here whilst we take stern manhood for our guide,
And guard our conduct with becoming pride,
Charm'd with the courage in her action shown,
We praise her mind, the image of our own.
She that can please is certain to persuade;
To-day belov'd, to-morrow is obey'd.
We think we see through reason's optics right,
Nor find how beauty's rays elude our sight:
Struck with her eye whilst we applaud her mind,
And when we speak her great, we wish her kind.
To-morrow, cruel pow'r! thou arm'st the fair
With flowing sorrow and dishevell'd hair:
Sad her complaint, and humble is her tale,
Her sighs explaining where her accents fail:
Here generous softness warms the honest breast;
We raise the sad, and succour the distress'd:
And whilst our wish prepares the kind relief,
Whilst pity mitigates her rising grief,
We sicken soon from her contagious care,
Grieve for her sorrows, groan for her despair,
And against love, too late, those bosoms arm,
Which tears can soften, and which sighs can warm.

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Against this nearest, cruelest of foes,
What shall wit meditate, or force oppose?
Whence, feeble Nature, shall we summon aid,
If by our pity and our pride betray'd?
External remedy shall we hope to find,
When the close fiend has gain'd our treacherous mind,
Insulting there does reason's power deride,
And, blind himself, conducts the dazzled guide?
My conqueror now, my lovely Abra, held
My freedom in her chains; my heart was fill'd
With her, with her alone; in her alone
It sought its peace and joy: while she was gone
It sigh'd, and griev'd, impatient of her stay;
Return'd, she chas'd those sighs, that grief, away:
Her absence made the night; her presence brought the day.
The ball, the play, the mask, by turns succeed;
For her I make the song; the dance with her I lead:
I court her, various, in each shape and dress
That luxury may form or thought express.
To-day beneath the palm-tree, on the plains,
In Deborah's arms and habit Abra reigns:
The wreath, denoting conquest, guides her brow.
And low, like Barak, at her feet I bow.
The mimic chorus sings her prosperous hand,
As she had slain the foe, and sav'd the land.
To-morrow she approves a softer air,
Forsakes the pomp and pageantry of war,
The form of peaceful Abigail assumes,
And from the village with the present comes:
The youthful band depose their glitteting arms,
Receive her bounties, and recite her charms;
Whilst I assume my father's step and mein,
To meet, with due regard, my future queen.

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If hap'ly Abra's will be now inclin'd
To range the woods or chase the flying hind,
Soon as the sun awakes, the sprightly court
Leave their repose, and hasten to the sport.
In lessen'd royalty, and humble state,
Thy king, Jerusalem! descends to wait
Till Abra comes. She comes; a milk-white steed,
Mixture of Persia's and Arabia's breed,
Sustains the nymph: her garments flying loose
(As the Sydonian maids or Thracian use)
And half her knee and half her breast appear,
By art, like negligence, disclos'd, and bare:
Her left hand guides the hunting courser's flight,
A silver bow she carries in her right,
And from the golden quiver at her side,
Rustles the ebon arrow's feather'd pride;
Sapphires and diamonds on her front display
An artificial moon's increasing ray.
Diana, huntress, mistress of the groves,
The favourite Abra speaks, and looks, and moves.
Her, as the present goddess, I obey,
Beneath her feet the captive game I lay;
The mingled chorus sing Diana's fame,
Clarions and horns in louder peals proclaim
Her mystic praise, the vocal triumphs bound
Against the hills; the hills reflect the sound.
If, tir'd this evening with the hunted woods,
To the large fish-pools or the glassy floods
Her mind to-morrow points, a thousand hands
To-night employ'd, obey the King's commands.
Upon the watery beach an artful pile
Of planks is join'd, and forms a moving isle;
A golden chariot in the midst is set,
And silver cygnets seem to feel its weight.

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Abra, bright queen, ascends her gaudy throne,
In semblance of the Grecian Venus known;
Tritons and sea-green naiads round her move,
And sing in moving strains the force of love;
Whilst, as the' approaching pageant does appear,
And echoing crowds speak mighty Venus near,
I, her adorer, too devoutly stand
Fast on the utmost margin of the land,
With arms and hopes extended, to receive
The fancied goddess rising from the wave.
O subject Reason! O imperious Love!
Whither yet further would my folly rove?
Is it enough that Abra should be great
In the wall'd palace or the rural seat;
That masking habits, and a borrow'd name,
Contrive to hide my plenitude of shame?
No, no: Jerusalem combin'd must see
My open fault and regal infamy.
Solemn a month is destin'd for the feast;
Abra invites; the nation is the guest.
To have the honour of each day sustain'd,
The woods are travers'd, and the lakes are drain'd:
Arabia's wilds and Egypt's are explor'd;
The edible creation decks the board:
Hardly the phenix 'scapes———
The men their lyres, the maids their voices raise,
To sing my happiness and Abra's praise,
And slavish bards our mutual loves rehearse
In lying strains and ignominious verse;
While from the banquet leading forth the bride,
Whom prudent love from public eyes should hide,
I show her to the world, confess'd and known,
Queen of my heart and partner of my throne.

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And now her friends and flatterers fill the court;
From Dan and from Beersheba they resort;
They barter places and dispose of grants,
Whole provinces unequal to their wants;
They teach her to recede or to debate;
With toys of love to mix affairs of state;
By practis'd rules her empire to secure,
And in my pleasure make my ruin sure.
They gave, and she transfer'd, the curs'd advice,
That monarchs should their inward soul disguise,
Dissemble and command, be false and wise;
By ignominious arts, for servile ends,
Should compliment their foes and shun their friends.
And now I leave the true and just supports
Of legal princes and of honest courts,
Barzillai's and the fierce Benaiah's heirs,
Whose sires, great partners in my father's cares,
Saluted their young king, at Hebron crown'd,
Great by their toil, and glorious by their wound:
And now, unhappy counsel, I prefer
Those whom my follies only made me fear,
Old Corah's brood and taunting Shimei's race,
Miscreants who ow'd their lives to David's grace;
Though they had spurn'd his rule and curs'd him
to his face.
Still Abra's pow'r, my scandal, still increas'd;
Justice submitted to what Abra pleas'd:
Her will alone could settle or revoke,
And law was fix'd by what she latest spoke.
Israel neglected, Abra was my care;
I only acted, thought, and liv'd for her.
I durst not reason with my wounded heart;
Abra possess'd; she was its better part.

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O! had I now review'd the famous cause
Which gave my righteous youth so just applause,
In vain on the dissembled mother's tongue
Had cunning art and sly persuasion hung;
And real care in vain, and native love,
In the true parent's panting breast had strove;
While both deceiv'd had seen the destin'd child
Or slain or sav'd, as Abra frown'd or smil'd.
Unknowing to command, proud to obey,
A lifeless king, a royal shade I lay.
Unheard the injur'd orphans now complain;
The widows' cries address the throne in vain.
Causes unjudg'd disgrace the loaded file,
And sleeping laws the king's neglect revile.
No more the elders throng'd around my throne
To hear my maxims, and reform their own;
No more the young nobility were taught
How Moses govern'd, and how David fought.
Loose and undisciplin'd the soldier lay,
Or lost in drink and game the solid day;
Porches and schools, design'd for public good,
Uncover'd, and with scaffolds cumber'd, stood,
Or nodded, threatening ruin—
Half pillars wanted their expected height,
And roofs, imperfect, prejudic'd the sight.
The artists grieve; the labouring people droop:
My father's legacy, my country's hope,
God's temples, lie unfinish'd—
The wise and grave deplor'd their monarch's fate,
And future mischiefs of a sinking state.
'Is this (the serious said) is this the man,
Whose active soul through every science ran?

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Who by just rule and elevated skill
Prescrib'd the dubious bounds of good and ill?
Whose golden sayings, and immortal wit,
On large phylacteries expressive writ,
Were to the forehead of the rabbins tied,
Our youth's instruction, and our age's pride?
Could not the wise his wild desires restrain;
Then was our hearing, and his preaching vain!
What from his life and letters were we taught,
But that his knowledge aggravates his fault?"
In lighter mood, the humorous and the gay
(As crown'd with roses at their feasts they lay)
Sent the full goblet, charg'd with Abra's name,
And charms superior to their master's fame.
Laughing, some praise the King, who let them see
How aptly luxe and empire might agree:
Some gloss'd, how love and wisdom were at strife,
And brought my Proverbs to confront my life.
'However, friend, here's to the King,' one cries:
'To him who was the King,' the friend replies.
'The King, for Judah's and for wisdom's curse,
To Abra yields: could I or thou do worse?
Our looser lives let chance or folly steer,
If thus the prudent and determin'd err.
Let Dinah bind with flowers her flowing hair,
And touch the lute and sound the wanton air;
Let us the bliss without the sting receive,
Free as we will, or to enjoy or leave.
Pleasures on levity's smooth surface flow;
Thought brings the weight that sinks the soul to woe,
Now be this maxim to the King convey'd,
And added to the thousand he has made.'
Sadly, O Reason, is thy power express'd,
Thou gloomy tyrant of the frighted breast!

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And harsh the rules which we from thee receive,
If for our wisdom we our pleasure give,
And more to think be only more to grieve:
If Judah's king, at thy tribunal tried,
Forsakes his joy to vindicate his pride;
And, changing sorrows, I am only found
Loos'd from the chains of love, in thine more strictly bound.

But do I call thee tyrant, or complain
How hard thy laws, how absolute thy reign?
While thou, alas! art but an empty name,
To no two men, whoe'er discours'd, the same;
The idle product of a troubled thought,
In borrow'd shapes and airy colours wrought;
A fancied line, and a reflected shade;
A chain which man to fetter man has made,
By artifice impos'd, by fear obey'd.

Yet, wretched name, or arbitrary thing,
Whence-ever I thy cruel essence bring,
I own thy influence, for I feel thy sting:
Reluctant, I perceive thee in my soul,
Form'd to command, and destin'd to control.
Yes, thy insulting dictates shall be heard;
Virtue for once shall be her own reward:
Yes, rebel Israel, this unhappy maid
Shall be dismiss'd; the crowd shall be obey'd:
The King his passion and his rule shall leave,
No longer Abra's, but the people's slave:
My coward soul shall bear its wayward fate;
I will, alas! be wretched to be great,
And sigh in royalty, and grieve in state.

I said, resolv'd to plunge into my grief
At once so far as to expect relief
From my despair alone—

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I chose to write the thing I durst not speak
To her I lov'd, to her I must forsake.
The harsh epistle labour'd much to prove
How inconsistent majesty and love.
'I always should (it said) esteem her well,
But never see her more: it bid her feel
No future pain for me; but instant wed
A lover more proportion'd to her bed,
And quiet dedicate her remnant life
To the just duties of an humble wife.'
She read, and forth to me she wildly ran,
To me, the ease of all her former pain.
She kneel'd, entreated, struggled, threaten'd, cried,
And with alternate passion liv'd and died;
Till now denied the liberty to mourn,
And by rude fury from my presence torn,
This only object of my real care,
Cut off from hope, abandon'd to despair,
In some few posting fatal hours is hurl'd [world.
From wealth, from power, from love, and from the
Here tell me, if thou dar'st, my conscious soul,
What different sorrows did within thee roll?
What pangs, what fires, what racks, didst thou sus-
What sad vicissitudes of smarting pain? [tain?
How oft from pomp and state did I remove,
To feed despair, and cherish hopeless love?
How oft, all day, recall'd I Abra's charms,
Her beauties press'd, and panting in my arms?
How oft, with sighs, view'd every female face
Where mimic fancy might her likeness trace?
How oft desir'd to fly from Israel's throne,
And live in shades with her and Love alone?
How oft, all night, pursued her in my dreams,
O'er flowery vallies and through crystal streams,

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And, waking, view'd with grief the rising sun,
And fondly mourn'd the dear delusion gone?
When thus the gather'd storms of wretched love
In my swoll'n bosom with long war had strove,
At length they broke their bounds; at length their force
Bore down whatever met its stronger course;
Laid all the civil bonds of manhood waste,
And scatter'd ruin as the torrent past.
So from the hills, whose hollow caves contain
The congregated snow and swelling rain,
Till the full stores their ancient bounds disdain;
Precipitate the furious torrent flows:
In vain would speed avoid, or strength oppose:
Towns, forests, herds, and men promiscuous drown'd,
With one great death deform the dreary ground;
The echo'd woes from distant rocks resound.
And now what impious ways my wishes took,
How they the monarch and the man forsook,
And how I follow'd an abandon'd will,
Through crooked paths and sad retreats of ill;
How Judah's daughters now, now foreign slaves,
By turns my prostituted bed receives;
Through tribes of women how I loosely rang'd,
Impatient, lik'd to-night, to-morrow chang'd,
And by the instinct of capricious lust
Enjoy'd, disdain'd, was grateful or unjust;
O, be these scenes from human eyes conceal'd,
In clouds of decent silence justly veil'd!
O, be the wanton images convey'd
To black oblivion and eternal shade!
Or let their sad epitome alone,
And outward lines, to future age be known,

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Enough to propagate the sure belief
That vice engenders shame, and folly broods o'er
Buried in sloth and lost in ease I lay; [grief.
The night I revell'd, and I slept the day:
New heaps of fuel damp'd my kindling fires,
And daily change extinguish'd young desires.
By its own force destroy'd, fruition ceas'd;
And always wearied, I was never pleas'd.
No longer now does my neglected mind
Its wonted stores and old ideas find.
Fix'd judgment there no longer does abide,
To take the true or set the false aside,
No longer does swift memory trace the cells
Where springing wit, or young invention dwells.
Frequent debauch to habitude prevails;
Patience of toil and love of virtue fails.
By sad degrees impair'd, my vigour dies,
Till I command no longer e'en in vice.
The women on my dotage build their sway:
They ask; I grant: they threaten; I obey.
In regal garments now I gravely stride,
Aw'd by the Persian damsels' haughty pride:
Now with the looser Syrian dance and sing,
In robes tuck'd up, opprobrious to the king.
Charm'd by their eyes, their manners I acquire,
And shape my foolishness to their desire;
Seduc'd and aw'd by the Philistine dame,
At Dagon's shrine I kindle impious flame.
With the Chaldean's charms her rites prevail,
And curling frankincense ascends to Baal.
To each new harlot I new altars dress,
And serve her god whose person I caress.
Where, my deluded sense, was reason flown?
Where the high majesty of David's throne?

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Where all the maxims of eternal truth,
With which the living God inform'd my youth,
When with the lewd Egyptian I adore
Vain idols, deities that ne'er before
In Israel's land had fix'd their dire abodes,
Beastly divinities, and droves of gods;
Osiris, Apis, powers that chew the cud,
And dog Anubis, flatterer for his food?
When in the woody hills' forbidden shade
I carv'd the marble, and invok'd its aid:
When in the fens to snakes and flies, with zeal
Unworthy human thought, I prostrate fell;
To shrubs and plants my vile devotion paid,
And set the bearded leek to which I pray'd;
When to all beings sacred rites were giv'n,
Forgot the Arbiter of earth and Heav'n?

Through these sad shades, this chaos in my soul,
Some seeds of light at length began to roll:
The rising motion of an infant ray
Shot glimmering through the cloud, and promis'd day.
And now one moment able to reflect,
I found the King abandon'd to neglect,
Seen without awe, and serv'd without respect.
I found my subjects amicably join
To lessen their defects, by citing mine.
The priest with pity pray'd for David's race,
And left his text to dwell on my disgrace.
The father, whilst he warn'd his erring son
The sad examples which he ought to shun,
Describ'd, and only nam'd not Solomon.
Each bard, each sire, did to his pupil sing,
'A wise child better than a foolish king.'

Into myself my reason's eye I turn'd,
And, as I much reflected, much I mourn'd.

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A mighty king I am, an earthly god,
Nations obey my word, and wait my nod!
I raise or sink, imprison or set free,
And life or death depends on my decree.
Fond the idea, and the thought is vain;
O'er Judah's king ten thousand tyrants reign.
Legions of lust, and various powers of ill
Insult the master's tributary will,
And he, from whom the nations should receive
Justice and freedom, lies himself a slave,
Tortur'd by cruel change of wild desires,
Lash'd by mad rage, and scorch'd by brutal fires.
O Reason! once again to thee I call,
Accept my sorrow, and retrieve my fall.
Wisdom, thou say'st, from Heaven receiv'd her birth,
Her beams transmitted to the subject earth:
Yet this great empress of the human soul
Does only with imagin'd pow'r control,
If restless passion by rebellious sway,
Compels the weak usurper to obey.
O troubled, weak, and coward, as thou art,
Without thy poor advice the labouring heart
To worse extremes with swifter steps would run,
Not sav'd by virtue, yet by vice undone.
Oft have I said, the praise of doing well
Is to the ear as ointment to the smell:
Now if some flies perchance, however small,
Into the alabaster urn should fall,
The odours of the sweets inclos'd would die,
And stench corrupt (sad change!) their place supply:
So the least faults, if mix'd with fairest deed,
Of future ill become the fatal seed;
Into the balm of purest virtue cast,
Annoy all life with one contagious blast.

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Lost Solomon! pursue this thought no more,
Of thy past errors recollect the store;
And silent weep, that while the deathless Muse
Shall sing the just, shall o'er their head diffuse
Perfumes with lavish hand, she shall proclaim
Thy crimes alone, and, to thy evil fame
Impartial, scatter damps and poisons on thy name.
Awaking therefore, as who long had dream'd,
Much of my women and their gods asham'd,
From this abyss of exemplary vice
Resolv'd, as time might aid my thought, to rise,
Again I bid the mournful goddess write
The fond pursuit of fugitive delight;
Bid her exalt her melancholy wing,
And rais'd from earth, and sav'd from passion, sing
Of human hope by cross event destroy'd,
Of useless wealth and greatness unenjoy'd;
Of lust and love, with their fantastic train,
Their wishes, smiles, and looks, deceitful all, and vain.

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POWER.

BOOK III.

TEXTS CHIEFLY ALLUDED TO IN THIS BOOK.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, Eccles. chap. xii. ver. 6.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose, chap. i. ver. 5.

The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually: and the wind returneth again according to his circuits, ver. 6.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again, ver. 7.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it, chap. xii. ver. 7.

Now, when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house, 2 Chron. chap vii. ver. 1.

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By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion, &c. Psal. cxxxvii. ver. 1.

I said of laughter, 'It is mad: and of mirth, What doth it?' Eccles. chap. ii. ver. 2.

—No man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end, chap. iii. ver. 11.

—Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him, ver. 14.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man, chap. xii. ver. 13.

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POWER.

BOOK. III.

THE ARGUMENT.

Solomon considers man through the several stages and conditi ons of life, and concludes, in general, that we are all miserable. He reflects more particularly upon the trouble and uncertainty of greatness and power; gives some instances thereof from Adam down to himself; and still concludes that ALL IS VANITY. He reasons again upon life, death, and a future being; finds human wisdom too imperfect to resolve his doubts; has recourse to religion; is informed by an angel what shall happen to himself, his family, and his kingdom, till the redemption of Israel: and, upon the whole, resolves to submit his inquiries and anxieties to the will of his Creator.

Come, then, my soul: I call thee by that name,
Thou busy thing, from whence I know I am;
For knowing that I am, I know thou art,
Since that must needs exist which can impart:
But how thou cam'st to be, or whence thy spring,
For various of thee priests and poets sing?
  Hear'st thou submissive; but a lowly birth,
Some secret particles of finer earth,
A plain effect which Nature must beget,
As motion orders, and as atoms meet,

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Companion of the body's good or ill,
From force of instinct more than choice of will,
Conscious of fear or valour, joy or pain,
As the wild courses of the blood ordain;
Who, as degrees of heat and cold prevail,
In youth dost flourish, and with age shalt fail,
Till mingled with thy partner's latest breath,
Thou fly'st dissolv'd in air, and lost in death.
Or if thy great existence would aspire
To causes more sublime, of heavenly fire
Wer't thou a spark struck off, a separate ray,
Ordain'd to mingle with terrestrial clay,
With it condemn'd for certain years to dwell,
To grieve its frailties, and its pains to feel;
To teach it good and ill, disgrace or fame,
Pale it with rage, or redden it with shame;
To guide its actions with informing care,
In peace to judge, to conquer in the war;
Render it agile, witty, valiant, sage,
As fits the various course of human age,
Till, as the earthly part decays and falls,
The captive breaks her prison's mouldering walls,
Hovers awhile upon the sad remains
Which now the pile or sepulchre contains,
And thence with liberty unbounded flies,
Impatient to regain her native skies?
Whate'er thou art, where'er ordain'd to go,
(Points which we rather may dispute than know)
Come on, thou little inmate of this breast,
Which, for thy sake, from passions I divest;
For these, thou say'st, raise all the stormy strife
Which hinder thy repose and trouble life;
Be the fair level of thy actions laid
As temperance wills, and prudence may persuade:

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Be thy affections undisturb'd and clear,
Guided to what may great or good appear,
And try if life be worth the liver's care.

Amass'd in man, there justly is beheld
What through the whole creation has excell'd;
The life and growth of plants, of beasts the sense,
The angel's forecast and intelligence;
Say, from these glorious seeds what harvest flows?
Recount our blessings, and compare our woes:
In its true light let clearest reason see
The man drag'd out to act, and forc'd to be;
Helpless and naked, on a woman's knees
To be expos'd or rear'd, as she may please,
Feel her neglect, and pine from her disease:
His tender eye, by too direct a ray,
Wounded, and flying from unpractis'd day;
His heart assaulted by invading air,
And beating fervent to the vital war;
To his young sense how various forms appear,
That strike his wonder and excite his fear;
By his distortions he reveals his pains;
He by his tears and by his sighs complains,
Till time and use assist the infant wretch,
By broken words and rudiments of speech,
His wants in plainer characters to show,
And paint more perfect figures of his woe.
Condemn'd to sacrifice his childish years
To babbling ignorance, and to empty fears;
To pass the riper period of his age,
Acting his part upon a crowded stage;
To lasting toils expos'd, and endless cares,
To open dangers, and to secret snares;
To malice which the vengeful foe intends,
And the more dangerous love of seeming friends:

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His deeds examin'd by the people's will,
Prone to forget the good, and blame the ill;
Or, sadly censur'd in their curs'd debate,
Who in the scorner's or the judge's seat
Dare to condemn the virtue which they hate:
Or would he rather leave this frantic scene,
And trees and beasts prefer to courts and men,
In the remotest wood and lonely grot
Certain to meet that worst of evils, thought,
Different ideas to his memory brought,
Some intricate, as are the pathless woods,
Impetuous some, as the descending floods;
With anxious doubts, with raging passions torn,
No sweet companion near with whom to mourn,
He hears the echoing rock return his sighs,
And from himself the frighted hermit flies,

Thus through what path soe'er of life we rove,
Rage companies our hate and grief our love;
Vex'd with the present moment's heavy gloom,
Why seek we brightness from the years to come?
Disturb'd and broken, like a sick man's sleep,
Our troubled thoughts to distant prospects leap,
Desirous still what flies us to o'ertake;
For hope is but the dream of those that wake:
But, looking back, we see the dreadful train
Of woes a-new, which, were we to sustain,
We should refuse to tread the path again:
Still adding grief, still counting from the first,
Judging the latest evil still the worst:
And sadly finding each progressive hour
Heighten their number and augment their pow'r;
Till by one countless sum of woes oppress'd,
Hoary with cares and ignorant of rest,

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We find the vital springs relax'd and worn,
Compell'd our common impotence to mourn:
Thus through the round of age to childhood we return;
Reflecting find, that naked from the womb
We yesterday came forth; that in the tomb
Naked again we must to-morrow lie,
Born to lament, to labour, and to die.

Pass we the ills which each man feels or dreads,
The weight or fall'n or hanging o'er our heads;
The bear, the lion, terrors of the plain;
The sheepfold scatter'd, and the shepherd slain;
The frequent terrors of the pathless wood,
The giddy precipice, the dangerous flood;
The noisome pestilence, that in open war
Terrible, marches through the mid-day air,
And scatters death; the arrow that, by night,
Cuts the dank mist, and, fatal, wings it flight;
The billowing snow, and violence of the shower,
That from the hills disperse their dreadful store,
And o'er the vales collected ruin pour;
The worm that gnaws the ripening fruit, sad guest,
Canker or locust, hurtful to infest
The blade; while husks elude the tiller's care,
And eminence of want distinguishes the year.

Pass we the slow disease and subtile pain
Which our weak frame is destin'd to sustain;
The cruel stone, with congregated war
Tearing his bloody way; the cold catarrh,
With frequent impulse and continued strife
Weakening the wasted seats of irksome life;
The gout's fierce rack, the burning fever's rage,
The sad experience of decay and age,

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Herself the sorest ill, while death and ease,
Oft and in vain invok'd, or to appease
Or end the grief, with hasty wings recede
From the vext patient and the sickly bed.
  Nought shall it profit that the charming fair,
Angelic, softest work of Heaven, draws near
To the cold shaking paralytic hand,
Senseless of beauty's touch or love's command,
Nor longer apt or able to fulfil
The dictates of its feeble master's will.
  Nought shall the psaltry and the harp avail,
The pleasing song or well-repeated tale,
When the quick spirits their warm march forbear,
And numbing coldness has unbrac'd the ear.
  The verdant rising of the flowery hill,
The vale enamell'd, and the crystal rill,
The ocean rolling, and the shelly shore,
Beautiful objects, shall delight no more,
When the lax'd sinews of the weaken'd eye
In watery damps or dim suffusion lie.
Day follows night; the clouds return again
After the falling of the latter rain,
But to the aged blind shall ne'er return
Grateful vicissitude; he still must mourn
The sun, and moon, and every starry light
Eclips'd to him, and lost in everlasting night.
  Behold where Age's wretched victim lies;
See his head trembling, and his half-clos'd eyes;
Frequent for breath his panting bosom heaves;
To broken sleeps his remnant sense he gives,
And only by his pains, awaking, finds he lives.
  Loos'd by devouring Time, the silver cord
Dissever'd lies; unhonour'd from the board

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The crystal urn, when broken, is thrown by;
And apter utensils their place supply.
These things and thou must share one equal lot;
Die, and be lost; corrupt, and be forgot;
While still another and another race
Shall now supply, and now give up the place.
From earth all came, to earth must all return,
Frail as the cord, and brittle as the urn.
  But be the terror of these ills suppress'd,
And view we man with health and vigour bless'd;
Home he returns with the declining sun,
His destin'd task of labour hardly done;
Goes forth again with the ascending ray,
Again his travail for his bread to pay,
And find the ill sufficient to the day.
Haply at night he does with horror shun
A widow'd daughter or a dying son;
His neighbour's offspring he to-morrow sees,
And doubly feels his want in their increase:
The next day, and the next, he must attend
His foe triumphant or his buried friend.
In every act and turn of life he feels
Public calamities or household ills:
The due reward to just desert refus'd,
The trust betray'd, the nuptial bed abus'd;
The judge corrupt, the long-depending cause,
And doubtful issue of misconstrued laws:
The crafty turns of a dishonest state,
And violent will of the wrong-doing great;
The venom'd tongue injurious to his fame,
Which nor can wisdom shun, nor fair advice reclaim.
  Esteem we these, my friends, event and chance,
Produc'd as atoms from their fluttering dance?

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Or higher yet their essence may we draw
From destin'd order and eternal law?
Again, my Muse, the cruel doubt repeat;
Spring they, I say, from accident or fate?
Yet such, we find, they are as can control
The servile actions of our wavering soul;
Can fright, can alter, or can chain the will;
Their ills all built on life, that fundamental ill.
O fatal search! in which the labouring mind,
Still press'd with weight of woe, still hopes to find
A shadow of delight, a dream of peace,
From years of pain, one moment of release;
Hoping, at least, she may herself deceive,
Against experience willing to believe:
Desirous to rejoice, condemn'd to grieve.
Happy the mortal man who now, at last,
Has through this doleful vale of misery past,
Who to his destin'd stage has carried on
The tedious load, and laid his burden down;
Whom the cut brass or wounded marble shows
Victor o'er life, and all her train of woes:
He happier yet who, privileg'd by fate
To shorter labour and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yesterday the gift of breath,
Ordered to-morrow to return to death:
But O! beyond description happiest he,
Who ne'er must roll on life's tumultuous sea;
Who with bless'd freedom from the general doom
Exempt, must never force the teeming womb,
Nor see the sun, nor sink into the tomb.
Who breathes must suffer, and who thinks must mourn;
And he alone is bless'd who ne'er was born.

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'Yet in thy turn, thou frowning Preacher, hear;
Are not these general maxims too severe?
Say, cannot power secure its owner's bliss?
And is not wealth the potent sire of peace?
Are victors bless'd with fame, or kings with ease?'
I tell thee, life is but one common care,
And man was born to suffer and to fear.
'But is no rank, no station, no degree,
From this contagious taint of sorrow free?'
None, mortal, none: yet in a bolder strain
Let me this melancholy truth maintain:
But hence, ye worldly and profane, retire,
For I adapt my voice and raise my lyre
To notions not by vulgar ear receiv'd:
Ye still must covet life and be deceiv'd;
Your very fear of death shall make ye try
To catch the shade of immortality:
Wishing on earth to linger, and to save
Part of its prey from the devouring grave;
To those who may survive ye, to bequeath
Something entire, in spite of time and death;
A fancied kind of being to retrieve,
And in a book or from a building live.
False hope! vain labour! let some ages fly,
The dome shall moulder, and the volume die.
Wretches, still taught, still will ye think it strange
That all the parts of this great fabric change,
Quit their old station and primeval frame,
And lose their shape, their essence, and their name?
Reduce the song; our hopes, our joys are vain;
Our lot is sorrow, and our portion pain.
What pause from woe, what hopes of comfort bring
The name of wise or great, of judge or king?

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What is a king? a man condemn'd to bear
The public burden of the nation's care;
Now crown'd, some angry faction to appease,
Now falls a victim to the people's ease;
From the first blooming of his ill-taught youth
Nourish'd in flattery, and estrang'd from truth:
At home, surrounded by a servile crowd
Prompt to abuse, and in detraction loud;
Abroad, begirt with men, and swords, and spears,
His very state acknowledging his fears;
Marching amidst a thousand guards, he shows
His secret terror of a thousand foes:
In war, however prudent, great, or brave,
To blind events and fickle chance a slave;
Seeking to settle what for ever flies,
Sure of the toil, uncertain of the prize.
But he returns with conquest on his brow,
Brings up the triumph, and absolves the vow:
The captive generals to his car are tied,
The joyful citizens' tumultuous tide
Echoing his glory, gratify his pride.
What is this triumph? madness, shouts, and noise,
One great collection of the people's voice.
The wretches he brings back, in chains relate
What may to-morrow be the victor's fate:
The spoils and trophies borne before him show
National loss, and epidemic woe;
Various distress, which he and his may know.
Does he not mourn the valiant thousands slain,
The heroes, once the glory of the plain,
Left in the conflict of the fatal day,
Or the wolf's portion, or the vulture's prey?
Does he not weep the laurel which he wears,
Wet with the soldiers' blood and widows' tears?

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See, where he comes, the darling of the war!
See millions crowding round the gilded car!
In the vast joys of this ecstatic hour,
And full fruition of successful pow'r,
One moment and one thought might let him scan
The various turns of life, and fickle state of man.
Are the dire images of sad distrust,
And popular change, obscur'd amid the dust
That rises from the victor's rapid wheel?
Can the loud clarion or shrill fife repel
The inward cries of care? can Nature's voice,
Plaintive, be drown'd, or lessen'd in the noise,
Though shouts as thunder loud afflict the air,
Stun the birds, now releas'd, and shake the ivory chair?

Yon crowd (he might reflect) yon joyful crowd,
Pleas'd with my honours, in my praises loud,
(Should fleeting Victory to the vanquish'd go,
Should she depress my arms and raise the foe)
Would for that foe with equal ardour wait
At the high palace, or the crowded gate;
With restless rage would pull my statues down,
And cast the brass a-new to his renown.

O impotent desire of worldly sway!
That I, who make the triumph of to-day,
May of to-morrow's pomp one part appear,
Ghastly with wounds, and lifeless on the bier!
Then (vileness of mankind!) then of all these
Whom my dilated eye with labour sees,
Would one, alas! repeat me good or great,
Wash my pale body, or bewail my fate?
Or, march'd I chain'd behind the hostile car,
The victor's pastime, and the sport of war,

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Would one, would one, his pitying sorrow lend,
Or be so poor to own he was my friend?
  Avails it then, O reason, to be wise?
To see this cruel scene with quicker eyes?
To know with more distinction to complain,
And have superior sense in feeling pain?
  Let us revolve that roll with strictest eye,
Where safe from time distinguish'd actions lie,
And judge if greatness be exempt from pain,
Or pleasure ever may with power remain.
  Adam, great type, for whom the world was made,
The fairest blessing to his arms convey'd,
A charming wife; and air, and sea, and land,
And all that move therein, to his command
Render'd obedient: say, my pensive Muse,
What did these golden promises produce?—
Scarce tasting life, he was of joy bereav'd;
One day, I think, in Paradise he liv'd,
Destin'd the next his journey to pursue
Where wounding thorns and cursed thistles grew.
Ere yet he earns his bread, a-down his brow,
Inclin'd to earth, his labouring sweat must flow;
His limbs must ache, with daily toils oppress'd,
Ere long-wish'd night brings necessary rest:
Still viewing with regret his darling Eve,
He for her follies and his own must grieve.
Bewailing still afresh their hapless choice,
His ear oft frighted with the imag'd voice
Of Heaven when first it thunder'd, oft his view,
Aghast, as when the infant lightning flew,
And the stern cherub stop'd the fatal road,
Arm'd with the flames of an avenging God;

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His younger son, on the polluted ground,
First fruit of death, lies plaintive of a wound
Given by a brother's hand; his eldest birth
Flies, mark'd by Heaven, a fugitive o'er earth:
Yet why these sorrows heap'd upon the sire,
Becomes nor man nor angel to inquire.
  Each age sin'd on, and guilt advanc'd with time;
The son still added to the father's crime;
Till God arose, and, great in anger, said,
'Lo! it repenteth me that man was made.
Withdraw thy light, thou Sun! be dark, ye Skies!
And from your deep abyss, ye Waters, rise!'
  The frighted angels heard the' Almighty Lord,
And o'er the earth, from wrathful vials, pour'd
Tempests and storm, obedient to his word.
Meantime his providence to Noah gave
The guard of all that he design'd to save:
Exempt from general doom the patriarch stood,
Contemn'd the waves, and triumph'd o'er the flood.
  The winds fall silent, and the waves decrease;
The dove brings quiet, and the olive peace;
Yet still his heart does inward sorrow feel,
Which faith alone forbids him to reveal.
If on the backward world his views are cast,
'Tis death diffus'd, and universal waste.
Present (sad prospect!) can he ought descry
But (what afflicts his melancholy eye)
The beauties of the ancient fabric lost,
In chains of craggy hill, or lengths of dreary coast?
While to high Heaven his pious breathings turn'd;
Weeping, he hop'd; and sacrificing, mourn'd;
When of God's image only eight he found
Snatch'd from the watery grave, and sav'd from nations drown'd;

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And of three sons, the future hopes of earth,
The seed whence empires must receive their birth,
One he foresees excluded heavenly grace,
And mark'd with curses, fatal to his race.
Abraham, potent prince, the friend of God,
Of human ills must bear the destin'd load,
By blood and battles must his power maintain,
And slay the monarchs ere he rules the plain;
Must deal just portions of a servile life
To a proud handmaid, and a peevish wife;
Must with the mother leave the weeping son,
In want to wander, and in wilds to groan;
Must take his other child, his age's hope,
To trembling Moriah's melancholy top,
Order'd to drench his knife in filial blood,
Destroy his heir, or disobey his God.
Moses beheld that God; but how beheld
The Deity, in radiant beams conceal'd,
And clouded in a deep abyss of light?
While present, too severe for human sight,
Nor staying longer than one swift-wing'd night:
The following days, and months, and years, d
creed
To fierce encounter, and to toilsome deed:
His youth with wants and hardships must engage
Plots and rebellions must disturb his age:
Some Corah still arose, some rebel slave,
Prompter to sink the state than he to save,
And Israel did his rage so far provoke,
That what the Godhead wrote the prophet brok
His voice scarce heard, his dictates scarce belie
In camps, in arms, in pilgrimage, he liv'd,
And died obedient to severest law,
Forbid to tread the Promis'd-land he saw.

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My father's life was one long line of care,
A scene of danger and a state of war:
Alarm'd, expos'd, his childhood must engage
The bear's rough gripe and foaming lion's rage.
By various turns his threaten'd youth must fear
Goliah's lifted sword, and Saul's emitted spear.
Forlorn he must, and persecuted, fly,
Climb the steep mountain, in the cavern lie,
And often ask, and be refus'd to die.

For ever from his manly toils are known
The weight of power and anguish of a crown.
What tongue can speak the restless monarch's woes,
When God and Nathan were declar'd his foes?
When every object his offence revil'd,
The husband murder'd, and the wife defil'd,
The parent's sins impress'd upon the dying child?
What heart can think the grief which he sustain'd,
When the King's crime brought vengeance on the land,
And the inexorable prophet's voice
Gave famine, plague, or war, and bid him fix his choice?

He died; and, oh! may no reflection shed
Its poisonous venom on the royal dead:
Yet the unwilling truth must be express'd
Which long has labour'd in this pensive breast;
Dying, he added to my weight of care;
He made me to his crimes undoubted heir;
Left his unfinish'd murder to his son,
And Joab's blood entail'd on Judah's crown.
Young as I was, I hasted to fulfil
The cruel dictates of my parent's will:
Of his fair deeds a distant view I took,
But turn'd the tube upon his faults to look;

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Forgot his youth, spent in his country's cause,
His care of right, his reverence to the laws;
But could with joy his years of folly trace,
Broken and old, in Bathsheba's embrace;
Could follow him where'er he stray'd from good,
And cite his sad example, whilst I trod
Paths open to deceit, and track'd with blood.
Soon docile to the secret acts of ill,
With smiles I could betray, with temper kill;
Soon in a brother could a rival view,
Watch all his acts, and all his ways pursue:
In vain for life he to the altar fled;
Ambition and revenge have certain speed.
Ev'n there, my soul, ev'n there he should have fell,
But that my interest did my rage conceal.
Doubling my crime, I promise and deceive,
Purpose to slay, whilst swearing to forgive:
Treaties, persuasions, sighs, and tears, are vain;
With a mean lie curs'd vengeance I sustain,
Join fraud to force, and policy to power,
Till of the destin'd fugitive secure,
In solemn state to parricide I rise,
And, as God lives, this day my brother dies.
Be witness to my tears, celestial Muse!
In vain I would forget, in vain excuse
Fraternal blood by my direction spilt;
In vain on Joab's head transfer the guilt:
The deed was acted by the subject's hand,
The sword was pointed by the King's command:
Mine was the murder; it was mine alone:
Years of contrition must the crime atone;
Nor can my guilty soul expect relief,
But from a long sincerity of grief.

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With an imperfect hand and trembling heart,
Her love of truth superior to her art,
Already the reflecting Muse has trac'd
The mournful figures of my actions past.
The pensive goddess has already taught
How vain is hope, and how vexatious thought;
From growing childhood to declining age,
How tedious every step, how gloomy every stage.
This course of vanity almost complete,
Tir'd in the field of life, I hope retreat
In the still shades of death; for dread, and pain,
And grief, will find their shafts elanc'd in vain,
And their points broke, retorted from the head,
Safe in the grave, and free among the dead.
Yet tell me, frighted reason, what is death?
Blood only stopp'd, and interrupted breath?
The utmost limit of a narrow span,
An end of motion, which with life began?
As smoke that rises from the kindling fires
Is seen this moment, and the next expires;
As empty clouds by rising winds are tost,
Their fleeting forms scarce sooner found than lost,
So vanishes our state, so pass our days,
So life but opens now, and now decays;
The cradle and the tomb, alas! so nigh,
To live is scarce distinguish'd from to die.
Cure of the miser's wish and coward's fear,
Death only shows us what we knew was near:
With courage, therefore, view the pointed hour,
Dread not death's anger, but expect his power,
Nor Nature's law with fruitless sorrow mourn,
But die, O mortal man! for thou wast born.
Cautious through doubt, by want of courage wise,
To such advice the reasoner still replies.

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Yet measuring all the long continued space,
Every successive day's repeated race,
Since Time first started from his pristine goal,
Till he had reach'd that hour wherein my soul
Join'd to my body, swell'd the womb, I was
(At least I think so) nothing; must I pass
Again to nothing when this vital breath
Ceasing, consigns me o'er to rest and death?
Must the whole man, amazing thought! return
To the cold marble or contracted urn?
And never shall those particles agree,
That were in life this individual he?
But sever'd, must they join the general mass,
Through other forms and shapes ordain'd to pass,
Nor thought nor image kept of what he was?
Does the great Word, that gave him sense, ordain
That life shall never wake that sense again?
And will no power his sinking spirits save
From the dark caves of death, and chambers of the grave?

Each evening I behold the setting sun
With downward speed into the ocean run;
Yet the same light (pass but some fleeting hours)
Exerts his vigour, and renews his powers;
Starts the bright race again: his constant flame
Rises and sets, returning still the same.
I mark the various fury of the winds,
These neither seasons guide, nor order binds;
They now dilate, and now contract their force;
Various their speed, but endless is their course.
From his first fountain and beginning ouze,
Down to the sea each brook and torrent flows;
Though sundry drops or leave or swell the stream,
The whole still runs with equal pace the same;

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Still other waves supply the rising urns,
And the eternal flood no want of water mourns.
  Why then must man obey the sad decree,
Which subjects neither sun, nor wind, nor sea?
  A flower that does with opening morn arise,
And, flourishing the day, at evening dies;
A winged eastern blast, just skimming o'er
The ocean's brow, and sinking on the shore;
A fire, whose flame through crackling stubble fly;
A meteor shooting from the summer-sky;
A bowl a-down the bending mountain roll'd;
A bubble breaking, and a fable told;
A noontide shadow, and a midnight dream,
Are emblems which with semblance apt proclaim
Our earthly course; but, O my soul! so fast
Must life run off, and death for ever last!
  This dark opinion, sure, is too confin'd,
Else whence this hope and terror of the mind?
Does something still, and somewhere, yet remain:
Reward or punishment, delight or pain?
Say, shall our relics second birth receive?
Sleep we to wake, and only die to live?
When the sad wife has clos'd her husband's eyes,
And pierc'd the echoing vault with doleful cries,
Lies the pale corpse not yet entirely dead,
The spirit only from the body fled,
The grosser part of heat and motion void,
To be by fire, or worm, or time destroy'd;
The soul, immortal substance, to remain
Conscious of joy and capable of pain?
And if her acts have been directed well,
While with her friendly clay she deign'd to dwell,
Shall she with safety reach her pristine seat,
Find her rest endless, and her bliss complete?

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And while the buried man we idly mourn,
Do angels joy to see his better half return?
But if she has deform'd this earthly life
With murderous rapine and seditious strife,
Amaz'd, repuls'd, and by those angels driven
From the ethereal seat and blissful heaven,
In everlasting darkness must she lie,
Still more unhappy that she cannot die?

Amid two seas, on one small point of land,
Wearied, uncertain, and amaz'd, we stand:
On either side our thoughts incessant turn,
Forward we dread, and looking back we mourn;
Losing the present in this dubious haste,
And lost ourselves betwixt the future and the past.

These cruel doubts contending in my breast,
My reason staggering and my hopes oppress'd,
Once more I said, once more I will inquire
What is this little, agile, pervious fire.
This fluttering motion which we call the Mind,
How does she act? and where is she confin'd?
Have we the power to guide her as we please?
Whence then those evils that obstruct our ease?
We happiness pursue; we fly from pain;
Yet the pursuit, and yet the flight is vain;
And while poor Nature labours to be bless'd,
By day with pleasure, and by night with rest,
Some stronger power eludes our sickly will,
Dashes our rising hope with certain ill,
And makes us, with reflective trouble, see
That all is destin'd which we fancy free.

That Power superior, then, which rules our mind,
Is his decree by human prayer inclin'd?
Will he for sacrifice our sorrows ease?
And can our tears reverse his firm decrees?

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Then let religion aid where reason fails,
Throw loads of incense in, to turn the scales,
And let the silent sanctuary show
What from the babbling schools we may not know,
How man may shun or bear his destin'd part of woe.
What shall amend, or what absolve our fate?
Anxious we hover in a mediate state
Betwixt infinity and nothing; bounds,
Or boundless terms, whose doubtful sense confounds:
Unequal thought, whilst all we apprehend
Is, that our hopes must rise, our sorrows end,
As our Creator deigns to be our friend.
I said,—and instant bade the priests prepare
The ritual sacrifice and solemn prayer.
Select from vulgar herds, with garlands gay,
A hundred bulls ascend the sacred way:
The artful youth proceed to form the choir,
They breathe the flute, or strike the vocal wire:
The maids in comely order next advance,
They beat the timbrel and instruct the dance:
Follows the chosen tribe, from Levi sprung,
Chanting by just return the holy song.
Along the choir in solemn state they past,
—The anxious King came last.
The sacred hymn perform'd, my promis'd vow
I paid, and, bowing at the altar low,
'Father of heaven! (I said) and judge of earth!
Whose word call'd out this universe to birth,
By whose kind power and influencing care
The various creatures move, and live, and are;
But ceasing once that care, withdrawn that power,
They move (alas!) and live, and are no more;
Omniscient Master, omnipresent King,
To thee, to thee, my last distress I bring.

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'Thou that canst still the raging of the seas,
Chain up the winds and bid the tempests cease,
Redeem my shipwreck'd soul from raging gusts
Of cruel passion, and deceitful lusts;
From storms of rage and dangerous rocks of pride,
Let thy strong hand this little vessel guide.
(It was thy hand that made it) through the tide
Impetuous of this life; let thy command
Direct my course, and bring me safe to land.

'If, while this wearied flesh draws fleeting breath,
Not satisfied with life, afraid of death,
It haply be thy will that I should know
Glimpse of delight or pause from anxious woe;
From now, from instant now, great Sire! dispel
The clouds that press my soul; from now reveal
A gracious beam of light; from now inspire
My tongue to sing, my hand to touch the lyre;
My open'd thought to joyous prospects raise,
And for thy mercy let me sing thy praise:
Or, if thy will ordains I still shall wait
Some new hereafter and a future state,
Permit me strength my weight of woe to bear,
And raise my mind superior to my care:
Let me, howe'er unable to explain
The secret labyrinths of thy ways to man,
With humble zeal confess thy awful power,
Still weeping hope, and wondering, still adore:
So in my conquest be thy might declar'd,
And for thy justice be thy name rever'd.'

My prayer scarce ended, a stupendous gloom
Darkens the air; loud thunder shakes the dome:
To the beginning miracle succeed
An awful silence, and religious dread.

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Sudden breaks forth a more than common day:
The sacred wood, which on the altar lay,
Untouch'd, unlighted, glows—
Ambrosial odour, such as never flows
From Arab's gum, or the Sabæan rose,
Does round the air evolving scents diffuse:
The holy ground is wet with heavenly dews:
Celestial music (such Jesides' lyre,
Such Miriam's timbrel would in vain require)
Strikes to my thought through my admiring ear,
With ectasy too fine, and pleasure hard to bear:
And, lo! what sees my ravish'd eye? what feels
My wondering soul? an opening cloud reveals
An heavenly form, embodied and array'd
With robes of light: I heard: the angel said,—
'Cease, Man, of woman born, to hope relief
From daily trouble and continued grief.
Thy hope of joy deliver to the wind;
Suppress thy passions, and prepare thy mind.
Free and familiar with misfortune grow;
Be us'd to sorrow, and inur'd to woe.
By weakening toil and hoary age o'ercome
See thy decrease, and hasten to thy tomb.
Leave to thy children tumult, strife, and war,
Portions of toil and legacies of care:
Send the successive ills through ages down,
And let each weeping father tell his son,
That, deeper struck, and more distinctly griev'd,
He must augment the sorrows he receiv'd.
'The child to whose success thy hope is bound,
Ere thou art scarce interr'd, or he is crown'd,
To lust of arbitrary sway inclin'd,
(That cursed poison to the prince's mind!)

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Shall from thy dictates and his duty rove,
And lose his great defence, his people's love:
Ill counsell'd, vanquish'd, fugitive, disgrac'd,
Shall mourn the fame of Jacob's strength effac'd:
Shall sigh the King diminish'd, and the crown
With lessen'd rays descending to his son:
Shall see the wreaths his grandsire knew to reap
By active toil and military sweat,
Pining incline their sickly leaves, and shed
Their falling honours from his giddy head:
By arms or prayer unable to assuage
Domestic horror and intestine rage;
Shall from the victor and the vanquish'd fear,
From Israel's arrow and from Judah's spear:
Shall cast his wearied limbs on Jordan's flood,
By brothers' arms disturb'd, and stain'd with kindred blood.

'Hence labouring years shall weep their destin'd race,
Charg'd with ill omens, sullied with disgrace:
Time, by necessity compell'd, shall go
Through scenes of war, and epochas of woe:
The empire lessen'd in a parted stream
Shall lose its course—
Indulge thy tears; the heathen shall blaspheme;
Judah shall fall, oppress'd by grief and shame,
And men shall, from her ruins, know her fame.

'New Egypts yet, and second bonds remain,
A harsher Pharaoh, and a heavier chain.
Again, obedient to a dire command,
Thy captive sons shall leave the Promis'd Land;
Their name more low, their servitude more vile,
Shall on Euphrates' bank renew the grief of Nile.

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'These pointed spires that wound the ambient sky,
Inglorious change! shall in destruction lie
Low, levell'd with the dust, their heights unknown,
Or measur'd by their ruin. Yonder throne,
For lasting glory built, design'd the seat
Of kings for ever bless'd, for ever great,
Remov'd by the invader's barbarous hand,
Shall grace his triumph in a foreign land;
The tyrant shall demand yon sacred load
Of gold and vessels set apart to God;
Then by vile hands to common use debas'd,
Shall send them flowing round his drunken feast,
With sacrilegious taunt and impious jest.

'Twice fourteen ages shall their way complete;
Empires by various turns shall rise and set,
While thy abandon'd tribes shall only know
A different master and a change of woe;
With downcast eyelids, and with looks aghast,
Shall dread the future or bewail the past.

'Afflicted Israel shall sit weeping down,
Fast by the streams where Babel's waters run,
Their harps upon the neighbouring willows hung,
Nor joyous hymn encouraging their tongue,
Nor cheerful dance their feet; with toil oppress'd,
Their wearied limbs aspiring but to rest.
In the reflective stream the sighing bride,
Viewing her charms impair'd, abash'd shall hide
Her pensive head, and in her languid face
The bridegroom shall foresee his sickly race,
While pondrous fetters vex their close embrace.
With irksome anguish then your priests shall mourn
Their long-neglected feasts' despair'd return,
And sad oblivion of their solemn days:
Thenceforth their voices they shall only raise,

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Louder to weep. By day your frighted seers
Shall call for fountains to express their tears,
And wish their eyes were floods: by night, from dreams
Of opening gulfs, black storms, and raging flames,
Starting amaz'd, shall to the people show [woe.
Emblems of heavenly wrath, and mystic types of
'The captives, as their tyrant shall require
That they should breathe the song and touch the lyre,
Shall say, "Can Jacob's servile race rejoice,
Untun'd the music, and disus'd the voice?
What can we play (they shall discourse) how sing
In foreign lands, and to a barbarous king?
We and our fathers, from our childhood bred
To watch the cruel victor's eye, to dread
The arbitrary lash, to bend, to grieve,
(Outcast of mortal race) can we conceive
Image of aught delightful, soft, or gay?
Alas! when we have toil'd the longsome day,
The fullest bliss our hearts aspire to know,
Is but some interval from active woe;
In broken rest and startling sleep to mourn,
Till morn the tyrant and the scourge return:
Bred up in grief, can pleasure be our theme?
Our endless anguish does not Nature claim?
Reason and sorrow are to us the same.
Alas! with wild amazement we require
If idle Folly was not Pleasure's sire?
Madness, we fancy, gave an ill-tim'd birth
To grinning Laughter and to frantic Mirth."
'This is the series of perpetual woe,
Which thou, alas! and thine are born to know.
Illustrious wretch! repine not, nor reply;
View not what Heaven ordains with reason's eye;
Too bright the object is, the distance is too high.

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The man who would resolve the work of fate,
May limit number and make crooked strait:
Stop thy inquiry, then, and curb thy sense,
Nor let dust argue with Omnipotence.
'Tis God who must dispose, and man sustain,
Born to endure, forbidden to complain:
Thy sum of life must his decrees fulfil;
What derogates from his command is ill,
And that alone is good which centres in his will.

'Yet that thy labouring senses may not droop,
(Lost to delight, and destitute of hope,)
Remark what I, God's messenger, aver
From Him, who neither can deceive nor err.
The land, at length redeem'd, shall cease to mourn,
Shall from her sad captivity return:
Sion shall raise her long-dejected head,
And in her courts the law again be read:
Again the glorious Temple shall arise,
And with new lustre pierce the neighbouring skies:
The promis'd seat of empire shall again
Cover the mountain, and command the plain;
And from thy race distinguish'd, One shall spring
Greater in act than victor, more than king;
In dignity and power sent down from Heaven
To succour earth. To him, to him 'tis given
Passion, and care, and anguish, to destroy:
Through him soft peace and plenitude of joy
Perpetual o'er the world redeem'd shall flow;
No more may man inquire, nor angel know.

'Now, Solomon, remembering who thou art,
Act through thy remnant life the decent part:
Go forth! be strong; with patience and with care
Perform and suffer; to thyself severe,

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Gracious to others, thy desires suppress'd,
Diffus'd thy virtues, first of men, be best!
Thy sum of duty let two words contain,
O may they graven in thy heart remain!
Be humble, and be just.' The angel said;
With upward speed his agile wings he spread,
Whilst on the holy ground I prostrate lay,
By various doubts impell'd, or to obey
Or to object: at length (my mournful look
Heaven-ward erect) determin'd, thus I spoke:
'Supreme, all-wise, eternal Potentate!
Sole Author, sole Disposer of our fate!
Enthron'd in light and immortality,
Whom no man fully sees, and none can see!
Original of Beings! Power divine!
Since that I live, and that I think, is thine;
Benign Creator! let thy plastic hand
Dispose its own effect: let thy command
Restore, great Father, thy instructed son,
And in my act may thy great will de done!'

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ALMA:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF THE MIND.

IN THREE CANTOS.

Παντα γελως, και παντα κονις, και παντα το μηδεν.
Παντα γαρ εξ αλογων εστι τα γιγνομενα.

Incert. ap. Stobæum.

CANTO I.

MATTHEW met Richard,* when or where
From story is not mighty clear:
Of many knotty points they spoke,
And *pro* and *con* by turns they took:
Rats half the manuscript have ate;
Dire hunger! which we still regret;
O! may they ne'er again digest
The horrors of so sad a feast:
Yet less our grief, if what remains,
Dear Jacob,† by thy care and pains
Shall be to future times convey'd:
It thus begins;
* * * * Here Matthew said,

* Richard Shelton. † Jacob Tonson, the bookseller.

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'Alma, in verse; in prose, the mind;
By Aristotle's pen defin'd,
Throughout the body squat or tall,
Is *bonâ fide*, all in all:
And yet, slap dash, is all again
In every sinew, nerve, and vein;
Runs here and there, like Hamlet's ghost,
While every where she rules the roast.

'This system, Richard, we are told
The men of Oxford firmly hold:
The Cambridge wits, you know, deny
With *ipse dixit* to comply:
They say, (for in good truth they speak
With small respect of that old Greek)
That, putting all his words together,
'Tis three blue beans in one blue bladder.

'Alma, they strenuously maintain,
Sits cock-horse on her throne, the brain,
And from that seat of thought dispenses
Her sovereign pleasure to the senses:
Two optic nerves, they say, she ties,
Like spectacles, across the eyes,
By which the spirits bring her word
Whene'er the balls are fix'd or stirr'd;
How quick at park and play they strike;
The duke they court; the toast they like;
And at St. James' turn their grace
From former friends, now out of place.

'Without these aids, to be more serious,
Her power, they hold, had been precarious:
The eyes might have conspir'd her ruin,
And she not known what they were doing.
Foolish it had been, and unkind,
That they should see, and she be blind.

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'Wise Nature likewise, they suppose,
Has drawn two conduits down our nose:
Could Alma else with judgment tell
When cabbage stinks, or roses smell?
Or who would ask for her opinion
Between an oyster and an onion?
For from most bodies, Dick, you know,
Some little bits ask leave to flow,
And as through these canals they roll,
Bring up a sample of the whole;
Like footmen running before coaches,
To tell the inn what lord approaches.

'By nerves about our palate plac'd,
She likewise judges of the taste;
Else (dismal thought!) our warlike men
Might drink thick Port for fine Champagne,
And our ill-judging wives and daughters
Mistake small-beer for citron-waters.

'Hence, too, that she might better hear,
She sets a drum at either ear,
And loud or gentle, harsh or sweet,
Are but the alarums which they beat.

'Last, to enjoy her sense of feeling,
(A thing she much delights to deal in)
A thousand little nerves she sends
Quite to our toes' and fingers' ends,
And these, in gratitude, again
Return their spirits to the brain:
In which their figure being printed
(As just before, I think, I hinted)
Alma inform'd can try the case,
As she had been upon the place.

'Thus while the judge gives different journies
To country counsel and attornies,

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He on the bench in quiet sits
Deciding, as they bring the writs.
The Pope thus prays and sleeps at Rome,
And very seldom stirs from home,
Yet sending forth his holy spies,
And having heard what they advise,
He rules the church's bless'd dominions,
And sets men's faith by his opinions.
'The scholars of the Stagyrite,
Who for the old opinion fight,
Would make their modern friends confess
The difference but from more to less:
The Mind, say they, while you sustain
To hold her station in the brain,
You grant, at least she is extended,
Ergo, the whole dispute is ended:
For till to-morrow should you plead
From form and structure of the head,
The Mind as visibly is seen
Extended through the whole machine.
Why should all honour then be ta'en
From lower parts to load the brain,
When other limbs we plainly see
Each in his way as brisk as he?
For music, grant the head receives it,
It is the artist's hand that gives it?
And though the skull may wear the laurel,
The soldier's arm sustains the quarrel.
Besides, the nostrils, ears, and eyes,
Are not his parts, but his allies:
Ev'n what you hear the tongue proclaim,
Comes *ab origine* from them.
What could the head perform alone,
If all their friendly aids were gone

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A foolish figure he must make,
Do nothing else but sleep and ache.
'Nor matters it that you can show
How to the head the spirits go;
Those spirits started from some goal,
Before they through the veins could roll;
Now we should hold them much to blame,
If they went back before they came.
'If, therefore, as we must suppose,
They came from fingers and from toes;
Or toes or fingers, in this case,
Of numskull's self should take the place;
Disputing fair you grant thus much,
That all sensation is but touch.
Dip but your toes into cold water,
Their correspondent teeth will chatter;
And strike the bottom of your feet,
You set your head into a heat.
The bully beat, and happy lover,
Confess that feeling lies all over.
'Note here, Lucretius dares to teach
(As all our youth may learn from Creech)
That eyes were made but could not view,
Nor hands embrace, nor feet pursue,
But heedless Nature did produce
The members first, and then the use:
What each must act was yet unknown,
Till all is mov'd by Chance alone.
'A man first builds a country-seat,
Then finds the walls not good to eat.
Another plants, and wondering sees
Nor books nor medals on his trees.
Yet poet and philosopher
Was he who durst such whims aver.

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Bless'd, for his sake, be human reason,
That came at all, though late in season.
'But no man sure e'er left his house,
And saddled Ball, with thoughts so wild
To bring a midwife to his spouse,
Before he knew she was with child:
And no man ever reap'd his corn,
Or from the oven drew his bread,
Ere hinds and bakers yet were born,
That taught them both to sow and knead.
Before they're ask'd can maids refuse?
Can'—'Pray, (says Dick) hold in your Muse;
While you Pindaric truths rehearse,
She hobbles in alternate verse.'
'Verse! (Mat replied) is that my care?'
'Go on, (quoth Richard) soft and fair.'
'This looks, friend Dick, as Nature had
But exercis'd the salesman's trade;
As if she haply had sat down
And cut out clothes for all the Town,
Then sent them out to Monmouth-street,
To try what persons they would fit;
But every free and licens'd tailor
Would in this thesis find a failure.
Should whims like these his head perplex,
How could he work for either sex?
His clothes as atoms might prevail,
Might fit a pismire or a whale.
No, no: he views with studious pleasure
Your shape before he takes your measure:
For real Kate he made the bodice,
And not for an ideal goddess.
No error near his shopboard lurk'd;
He knew the folks for whom he work'd:

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Still to their size he aim'd his skill,
Else, pr'ythee, who would pay his bill?
'Next, Dick, if Chance herself should vary,
Observe how matters would miscarry:
Across your eyes, friend, place your shoes,
Your spectacles upon your toes,
Then you and Memmius shall agree
How nicely men would walk or see.
'But wisdom, peevish and cross-grain'd,
Must be oppos'd to be sustain'd;
And still your knowledge will increase,
As you make other people's less.
In arms and science 'tis the same;
Our rivals' hurts create our fame.
At Faubert's,* if disputes arise
Among the champions for the prize,
To prove who gave the fairer butt,
John shows the chalk on Robert's coat.
So for the honour of your book,
It tells where other folks mistook,
And as their notions you confound,
Those you invent get farther ground.
'The commentators on old Ari-
Stotle ('tis urg'd) in judgment vary:
They to their own conceits have brought
The image of his general thought,
Just as the melancholic eye
Sees fleets and armies in the sky,
And to the poor apprentice' ear
The bells sound 'Whittington Lord May'r.'
The conjurer thus explains his scheme;
Thus spirits walk, and prophets dream;

* The fencing and riding master.

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North-Britons thus have second sight,
And Germans, free from gunshot, fight.
'Theodoret and Origen,
And fifty other learned men,
Attest, that if their comments find,
The traces of their master's mind,
Alma can ne'er decay nor die:
This flatly t' other sect deny,
Simplicius, Theophrast, Durand,
Great names, but hard in verse to stand:
They wonder men should have mistook
The tenets of their master's book,
And hold that Alma yields her breath,
O'ercome by age, and seiz'd by death.
Now which were wise? and which were fools?
Poor Alma sits between two stools;
The more she reads the more perplex'd,
The comment ruining the text;
Now fears, now hopes her doubtful fate:
But, Richard, let her look to that—
Whilst we our own affairs pursue.
'These different systems, old or new,
A man with half an eye may see
Were only form'd to disagree.
Now to bring things to fair conclusion,
And save much Christian ink's effusion,
Let me propose an healing scheme,
And sail along the middle stream;
For, Dick, if we could reconcile
Old Aristotle with Gassendus,
How many would admire our toil,
And yet how few would comprehend us!
'Here, Richard, let my scheme commence:
Oh! may my words be lost in sense,

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While pleased Thalia deigns to write
The slips and bounds of Alma's flight.
'My simple system shall suppose
That Alma enters at the toes;
That then she mounts by just degrees,
Up to the ankles, legs, and knees;
Next, as the sap of life does rise,
She lends her vigour to the thighs;
And, all these under regions past,
She nestles somewhere near the waist!
Gives pain or pleasure, grief or laughter,
As we shall show at large hereafter:
Mature, if not improv'd by time,
Up to the heart she loves to climb;
From thence, compell'd by craft and age,
She makes the head her latest stage.'
'From the feet upward to the head,—
Pithy, and short (says Dick) proceed.'
'Dick, that is not an idle notion;
Observe the progress of the motion:
First I demonstratively prove,
That feet were only made to move,
And legs desire to come and go,
For they have nothing else to do.
'Hence, long before the child can crawl,
He learns to kick, to wince, and sprawl;
To hinder which, your midwife knows
To bind those parts extremely close,
Lest Alma, newly enter'd in,
And stunn'd at her own christening's din,
Fearful of future grief and pain,
Should silently sneak out again.
Full piteous seems young Alma's case,
As in a luckless gamester's place,
She would not play, yet must not pass.

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'Again as she grows something stronger,
And master's feet are swath'd no longer,
If in the night too oft he kicks,
Or shows his loco-motive tricks,
These first assaults fat Kate repays him,
When half-asleep she overlays him.

'Now mark, dear Richard, from the age
That children tread this worldly stage,
Broomstaff or poker they bestride,
And round the parlour love to ride,
Till thoughtful father's pious care
Provides his brood, next Smithfield fair,
With supplemental hobbyhorses;
And happy be their infant courses!

'Hence for some years they ne'er stand still;
Their legs, you see, direct their will;
From opening morn till setting sun
Around the fields and woods they run;
They frisk, and dance, and leap, and play,
Nor heed what Friend or Snape can say.

'To her next stage as Alma flies,
And likes, as I have said, the thighs,
With sympathetic power she warms
Their good allies and friends, the arms;
While Betty dances on the green,
And Susan is at stoolball seen;
While John for ninepins does declare,
And Roger loves to pitch the bar;
Both legs and arms spontaneous move,
Which was the thing I meant to prove.

'Another motion now she makes:
O' need I name the seat she takes?
His thought quite chang'd the stripling finds;
The sport and race no more he minds;

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Neglected Tray and Pointer lie,
And covies unmolested fly:
Sudden the jocund plain he leaves,
And for the nymph in secret grieves:
In dying accents he complains
Of cruel fires and raging pains.
The nymph, too, longs to be alone,
Leaves all the swains and sighs for one:
The nymph is warm'd with young desire,
And feels, and dies, to quench his fire.
They meet each evening in the grove:
Their parley but augments their love;
So to the priest their case they tell;
He ties the knot, and all goes well.

'But, O my Muse, just distance keep,
Thou art a maid, and must not peep.
In nine month's time the boddice loose,
And petticoats too short, disclose
That at this age the active mind
About the waist lies most confin'd,
And that young life and quickening sense
Spring from his influence darted thence:
So from the middle of the world
The sun's prolific rays are hurl'd;
'Tis from that seat he darts those beams
Which quicken earth with genial flames.'

Dick, who thus long had passive sat,
Here strok'd his chin and cock'd his hat,
Then slapp'd his hand upon the board,
And thus the youth put in his word:
'Love's advocates, sweet sir, would find him
A higher place than you assign'd him.'
'Love's advocates, Dick, who are those?'—
'The poets you may well suppose.

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I'm sorry, sir, you have discarded
The men with whom till now you herded.
Prosemen alone, for private ends,
I thought, forsook their ancient friends,
In cor stillavit, cries Lucretius,
If he may be allow'd to teach us:
The self-same thing soft Ovid says,
(A proper judge in such a case.)
Horace his phrase is *torret jecur*,
And happy was that curious speaker.
Here Virgil, too, has plac'd this passion;
What signifies too long quotation?
In ode and epic plain the case is,
That Love holds one of these two places.'
'Dick, without passion or reflection,
I'll straight demolish this objection.
'First, poets, all the world agrees,
Write half to profit, half to please;
Matter and figure they produce,
For garnish this, and that for use;
And, in the structure of their feasts,
They seek to feed and please their guests:
But one may balk this good intent,
And take things otherwise than meant.
Thus, if you dine with my Lord May'r,
Roast beef and ven'son is your fare,
Thence you proceed to swan and bustard,
And persevere in tart and custard:
But tulip-leaves and lemon-peel,
Help only to adorn the meal;
And painted flags, superb and neat,
Proclaim you welcome to the treat.
The man of sense his meat devours,
But only smells the peel and flow'rs;

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And he must be an idle dreamer,
Who leaves the pie, and gnaws the streamer.
'That Cupid goes with bow and arrows,
And Venus keeps her coach and sparrows,
Is all but emblem to acquaint one
The son is sharp, the mother wanton.
Such images have sometimes shown
A mystic sense, but ofther none;
For who conceives what bards devise,
That Heaven is plac'd in Celia's eyes?
Or where's the sense direct, and moral,
That teeth are pearl, or lips are coral?
'Your Horace owns he various writ,
As wild or sober maggots bit;
And where too much the poet ranted,
The sage philosopher recanted:
His grave Epistles may disprove
The wanton Odes he made to love.
'Lucretius keeps a mighty pother
With Cupid and his fancied mother;
Calls her great Queen of earth and air,
Declares that winds and seas obey her,
And, while her honour he rehearses,
Implores her to inspire his verses.
Yet, free from this poetic madness,
Next page he says, in sober sadness,
That she and all her fellow gods
Sit idling in their high abodes,
Regardless of this world below,
Our health or hanging, weal or woe;
Nor once disturb their heavenly spirits
With Scapin's cheats, or Cæsar's merits.
'Nor e'er can Latin poets prove
Where lies the real seat of Love:'

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Jecur they burn, and *cor* they pierce,
As either best supplies their verse;
And, if folks ask the reason for't,
Say one was long, and t' other short.
Thus I presume the British Muse
May take the freedom strangers use.
In prose our property is greater;
Why should it then be less in metre?
If Cupid throws a single dart,
We make him wound the lover's heart;
But if he takes his bow and quiver,
'Tis sure he must transfix the liver:
For rhyme with reason may dispense,
And sound has right to govern sense.
'But let your friends in verse suppose,
What ne'er shall be allow'd in prose,
Anatomists can make it clear
The liver minds his own affair,
Kindly supplies our public uses,
And parts and strains the vital juices,
Still lays some useful bile aside,
To tinge the chyle's insipid tide,
Else we should want both gibe and satire,
And all be burst with pure good nature:
Now gall is bitter with a witness,
And love is all delight and sweetness:
My logic then has lost its aim,
If sweet and bitter be the same;
And he, methinks, is no great scholar
Who can mistake desire for choler.
'The like may of the heart be said;
Courage and terror there are bred.
All those whose hearts are loose and low
Start, if they hear but the tattoo:

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And mighty physical their fear is,
For soon as noise of combat near is,
Their heart, descending to their breeches,
Must give their stomach cruel twitches:
But heroes who o'ercome or die,
Have their hearts hung extremely high,
The strings of which, in battle's heat,
Against their very corslets beat,
Keep time with their own trumpet's measure,
And yield them most excessive pleasure.

'Now if 'tis chiefly in the heart
That courage does itself exert,
'Twill be prodigious hard to prove
That this is eke the throne of Love.
Would Nature make one place the seat
Of fond desire and fell debate?
Must people only take delight in
Those hours when they are tir'd with fighting?
And has no man but who has kill'd
A father, right to get a child?
These notions, then I think but idle,
And love shall still possess the middle.

'This truth more plainly to discover,
Suppose your hero were a lover;
Though he before had gall and rage,
Which death or conquest must assuage,
He grows dispirited and low,
He hates the fight and shuns the foe.

'In scornful sloth Achilles slept,
And for his wench, like Tallboy, wept,
Nor would return to war and slaughter,
Till they brought back the parson's daughter.

'Antonius fled from Actium's coast,
Augustus pressing Asia lost:

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His sails by Cupid's hand unfurl'd,
To keep the fair, he gave the world.
Edward our Fourth, rever'd and crown'd,
Vigorous in youth, in arms renown'd,
While England's voice and Warwick's care
Design'd him Gallia's beauteous heir,
Chang'd peace and power for rage and wars,
Only to dry one widow's tears.

'France's Fourth Henry we may see
A servant to the fair d'Estree;
When quitting Goutras' prosp'rous field,
And fortune taught at length to yield,
He from his guards and midnight tent,
Disguis'd, o'er hills and vallies went,
To wanton with the sprightly dame,
And in his pleasure lost his fame.

'Bold is the critic who dares prove
These heroes were no friends to love;
And bolder he who dares aver
That they were enemies to war:
Yet when their thought should, now or never,
Have rais'd their heart or fir'd their liver,
Fond Alma to those parts was gone,
Which Love more justly calls his own.

'Examples I could cite you more,
But be contented with these four:
For when one's proofs are aptly chosen,
Four are as valid as four dozen.
One came from Greece, and one from Rome;
The other two grew nearer home:
For some in ancient books delight,
Others prefer what moderns write;
Now I should be extremely loth
Not to be thought expert in both.'

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CANTO II.

But shall we take the Muse abroad
To drop her idly on the road,
And leave our subject in the middle,
As Butler did his Bear and Fiddle?
Yet he, consummate master, knew
When to recede, and where pursue:
His noble negligences teach
What others' toils despair to reach.
He, perfect dancer, climbs the rope,
And balances your fear and hope:
If after some distinguish'd leap
He drops his pole and seems to slip,
Straight gathering all his active strength,
He rises higher half his length:
With wonder you approve his sleight,
And owe your pleasure to your fright:
But like poor Andrew I advance,
False mimic of my master's dance;
Around the cord a while I sprawl,
And thence, though low, in earnest fall.
My preface tells you I digress'd:
He's half absolv'd who has confess'd.
'I like, (quoth Dick) your simile,
And, in return, take two from me.
As masters in the *clare-obscure*
With various light your eyes allure,
A flaming yellow here they spread,
Draw off in blue, or charge in red;

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Yet from these colours oddly mix'd,
Your sight upon the whole is fix'd:
Or as, again, your courtly dames
(Whose clothes returning birth-day claims)
By arts improve the stuffs they vary,
And things are best as most contrary;
The gown with stiff embroidery shining,
Looks charming with a slighter lining;
The out-, if Indian figure stain,
The in-side must be rich and plain:
So you, great authors, have thought fit
To make digression temper wit:
When arguments too fiercely glare,
You calm them with a milder air:
To break their points, you turn their force,
And furbelow the plain discourse.'
'Richard, (quoth Mat) these words of thine
Speak something sly and something fine;
But I shall e'en resume my theme,
However thou may'st praise or blame.
'As people marry now and settle,
Fierce Love abates his usual mettle;
Worldly desires and household cares
Disturb the godhead's soft affairs:
So now, as health or temper changes,
In larger compass Alma ranges;
This day below, the next above,
As light or solid whimsies move.
So merchant has his house in Town,
And country-seat near Banstead Down;
From one he dates his foreign letters,
Sends out his goods and duns his debtors;
In t' other, at his hours of leisure,
He smokes his pipe and takes his pleasure.

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'And now your matrimonial Cupid,
Lash'd on by Time, grows tir'd and stupid:
For story and experience tell us
That man grows cold, and woman jealous.
Both would their little ends secure;
He sighs for freedom, she for pow'r:
His wishes tend abroad to roam,
And her's to domineer at home.
Thus passion flags by slow degrees,
And ruffled more, delighted less,
The busy mind does seldom go
To those once charming seats below;
But, in the breast encamp'd, prepares
For well-bred feints and future wars.
The man suspects his lady's crying
(When he last autumn lay a-dying)
Was but to gain him to appoint her,
By codicil, a larger jointure:
The woman finds it all a trick
That he could swoon when she was sick,
And knows that in that grief he reckon'd
On black-ey'd Susan for his second.
'Thus having strove some tedious years
With feign'd desires and real fears,
And tir'd with answers and replies
Of John affirms, and Martha lies;
Leaving this endless altercation,
The mind affects a higher station.
'Poltis, that generous King of Thrace,
I think was in this very case.
All Asia now was by the ears,
And gods beat up for volunteers
To Greece and Troy, while Poltis sate
In quiet governing his state.

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And whence, said the pacific king,
Does all this noise and discord spring?
Why, Paris took Atrides' wife—
With ease I could compose his strife:
The injur'd hero should not lose,
Nor the young lover want, a spouse.
But Helen chang'd her first condition,
Without her husband's just permission.
What from the dame can Paris hope?
She may as well from him elope.
Again, How can her old good-man
With honour take her back again?
From hence I logically gather
The woman cannot live with either.
Now I have two right honest wives,
For whose possession no man strives:
One to Atrides I will send,
And t' other to my Trojan friend.
Each prince shall thus with honour have
What both so warmly seem to crave;
The wrath of gods and man shall cease,
And Poltis live and die in peace.
Dick, if this story pleaseth thee,
Pray thank Dan Pope, who told it me.
'Howe'er swift Alma's flight may vary,
(Take this by way of corollary)
Some limbs she finds the very same
In place, and dignity, and name;
These dwell at such convenient distance,
That each may give his friend assistance.
Thus he who runs or dances, begs
The equal vigour of two legs;
So much to both does Alma trust,
She ne'er regards which goes the first.

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Teague could make neither of them stay,
When with himself he ran away.
The man who struggles in the fight,
Fatigues left arm as well as right;
For whilst one hand exalts the blow,
And on the earth extends the foe,
T' other would take it wondrous ill
If in your pocket he lay still.
And when you shoot, and shut one eye,
You cannot think he would deny
To lend the other friendly aid,
Or wink as coward, and afraid.
No, sir; whilst he withdraws his flame,
His comrade takes the surer aim.
One moment if his beams recede,
As soon as e'er the bird is dead,
Opening again, he lays his claim
To half the profit, half the fame,
And helps to pocket up the game.
'Tis thus one tradesman slips away,
To give his partner fairer play.

'Some limbs again, in bulk or stature
Unlike, and not a-kin by nature,
In concert act, like modern friends,
Because one serves the other's ends.
The arm thus waits upon the heart,
So quick to take the bully's part,
That one, though warm, decides more slow
Than t' other executes the blow:
A stander-by may chance to have it,
Ere Hack himself perceives he gave it.

'The amorous eyes thus always go
A-strolling for their friends below;

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For long before the 'squire and dame
Have *tête à tête* reliev'd their flame,
Ere visits yet are brought about,
The eye by sympathy looks out,
Knows Florimel, and longs to meet her,
And if he sees, is sure to greet her,
Though at sash-window, on the stairs,
At court, nay, (authors say) at pray'rs.—
'The funeral of some valiant knight,
May give this thing its proper light.
View his two gauntlets; these declare
That both his hands were us'd to war;
And from his two gilt spurs 'tis learn'd
His feet were equally concern'd:
But have you not with thought beheld
The sword hang dangling o'er the shield?
Which shows the breast that plate was us'd to,
Had an ally right-arm to trust to;
And by the peep-holes in his crest,
Is it not virtually confess'd
That there his eye took distant aim
And glanc'd respect to that bright dame
In whose delight his hope was center'd,
And for whose glove his life he ventur'd?
'Objections to my general System
May rise, perhaps, and I have miss'd them;
But I can call to my assistance
Proximity (mark that!) and distance;
Can prove that all things, on occasion,
Love union, and desire adhesion;
That Alma merely is a scale,
And motives, like the weights, prevail:
If neither side turn down or up,
With loss or gain, with fear or hope,

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The balance always would hang even,
Like Mah'met's tomb, 'twixt earth and heaven.
'This, Richard, is a curious case:
Suppose your eyes sent equal rays
Upon two distant pots of ale,
Not knowing which was mild or stale;
In this sad state your doubtful choice
Would never have the casting voice;
Which best or worst you could not think,
And die you must for want of drink,
Unless some chance inclines your sight,
Setting one pot in fairer light;
Then you prefer, or A or B,
As lines and angles best agree;
Your sense resolv'd, impels your will;
She guides your hand—So drink your fill.
'Have you not seen a baker's maid
Between two equal panniers sway'd?
Her tallies useless lie and idle,
If plac'd exactly in the middle;
But forc'd from this unactive state,
By virtue of some casual weight,
On either side you hear them clatter,
And judge of right and left hand matter.
'Now, Richard, this coercive force
Without your choice must take its course.
Great kings to wars are pointed forth,
Like loaded needles to the North,
And thou and I, by power unseen,
Are barely passive, and suck'd in
To Henault's vaults or Celia's chamber,
As straw and paper are by amber.
If we sit down to play or set
(Suppose at Ombre or Basset)

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Let people call us cheats or fools,
Our cards and we are equal tools.
We sure in vain the cards condemn;
Ourselves both cut and shuffled them:
In vain on Fortune's aid rely;
She only is a stander-by.
Poor men! poor papers! we and they
Do some impulsive force obey,
And are but play'd with—do not play.
But space and matter we should blame;
They palm'd the trick that lost the game.

'Thus to save further contradiction
Against what you may think but fiction,
I for attraction, Dick, declare,
Deny it those bold men that dare.
As well your motion as your thought
Is all by hidden impulse wrought;
Ev'n saying that you think or walk,
How like a country 'squire you talk?

'Mark then;—Where fancy or desire
Collects the beams of vital fire,
Into that limb fair Alma slides,
And there, *pro tempore*, resides;
She dwells in Nicolini's tongue,
When Pyrrhus chants the heavenly song;
When Pedro does the lute command,
She guides the cunning artist's hand;
Through Macer's gullet she runs down,
When the vile glutton dines alone;
And, void of modesty and thought,
She follows Bibo's endless draught.
Through the soft sex again she ranges,
As youth, caprice, or fashion, changes:

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Fair Alma, careless and serene,
In Fanny's sprightly eyes is seen,
While they diffuse their infant beams,
Themselves not conscious of their flames.
Again, fair Alma sits confess'd
On Florimel's experter breast,
When she the rising sigh constrains,
And, by concealing, speaks her pains.
In Cynthia's neck fair Alma glows,
When the vain thing her jewel shows;
When Jenny's stays are newly lac'd,
Fair Alma plays about her waist;
And when the swelling hoop sustains
The rich brocade, fair Alma deigns
Into that lower space to enter,
Of the large round herself the centre.

'Again; that single limb or feature
(Such is the cogent force of Nature)
Which most did Alma's passion move,
In the first object of her love,
For ever will be found confess'd,
And printed on the amorous breast.

'O Abelard! ill-fated youth,
Thy tale will justify this truth;
But well I weet thy cruel wrong
Adorns a nobler poet's song:
Dan Pope, for thy misfortune griev'd,
With kind concern and skill has weav'd
A silken web, and ne'er shall fade
Its colours gently; as he laid
The mantle o'er thy sad distress,
And Venus shall the texture bless.
He o'er the weeping nun has drawn
Such artful folds of sacred lawn,

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That Love, with equal grief and pride,
Shall see the crime he strives to hide,
And softly drawing back the veil,
The god shall to his votaries tell
Each conscious tear, each blushing grace,
That deck'd dear Eloïsa's face.
Happy the poet, bless'd the lays,
Which Buckingham has deign'd to praise.
'Next, Dick, as youth and habit sways,
A hundred gambols Alma plays.
If, whilst a boy, Jack run from school,
Fond of his hunting-horn and pole,
Though gout and age his speed detain,
Old John halloos his hounds again:
By his fire-side he starts the hare,
And turns her in his wicker-chair.
His feet, however lame, you find,
Have got the better of his mind.
'If, while the Mind was in her leg,
The dance affected nimble Peg,
Old Madge bewitch'd, at sixty-one
Calls for Green-Sleeves and Jumping-Joan.
In public mask or private ball,
From Lincoln's-Inn to Goldsmith's-Hall,
All Christmas long away she trudges,
Trips it with 'prentices and judges;
In vain her children urge her stay,
And age or palsy bar the way:
But if those images prevail,
Which whilom did affect the tail,
She still reviews the ancient scene,
Forgets the forty years between;
Awkwardly gay, and oddly merry,
Her scarf pale pink, her headnot cherry,

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O'erheated with ideal rage,
She cheats her son to wed her page.
'If Alma, whilst the man was young,
Slipp'd up too soon into his tongue,
Pleas'd with his own fantastic skill,
He lets that weapon ne'er lie still:
On any point if you dispute,
Depend upon it he'll confute:
Change sides, and you increase your pain;
For he'll confute you back again:
For one may speak with Tully's tongue,
Yet all the while be in the wrong;
And 'tis remarkable that they
Talk most, who have the least to say.
Your dainty speakers have the curse
To plead bad causes down to worst;
As dames who native beauty want,
Still uglier look the more they paint.
'Again: if in the female sex
Alma should on this member fix,
(A cruel and a desperate case,
From which heaven shield my lovely lass!)
For evermore all care is vain
That would bring Alma down again.
As in habitual gout or stone,
The only thing that can be done
Is to correct your drink and diet,
And keep the inward foe in quiet;
So if for any sins of ours,
Or our forefathers, higher powers,
Severe though just, afflict our life
With that prime ill, a talking wife,
Till death shall bring the kind relief,
We must be patient or be deaf.

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'You know a certain lady, Dick,
Who saw me when I last was sick;
She kindly talk'd, at least three hours,
Of plastic forms, and mental pow'rs;
Describ'd our pre-existing station,
Before this vile terrene creation;
And, lest I should be wearied, Madam,
To cut things short, came down to Adam;
From whence, as fast as she was able,
She drowns the world, and builds up Babel:
Through Syria, Persia, Greece, she goes,
And takes the Romans in the close.

'But we'll descant on general nature;
This is a system, not a satire.

'Turn we this globe, and let us see
How different nations disagree
In what we wear, or eat, and drink;
Nay, Dick, perhaps in what we think.
In water as you smell and taste
The soils through which it rose and past,
In Alma's manners you may read
The place where she was born and bred.

'One people from their swaddling-bands
Releas'd their infants' feet and hands:
Here Alma to these limbs was brought,
And Sparta's offspring kick'd and fought.
Another taught their babes to talk,
Ere they could yet in go-carts walk:
There Alma settled in the tongue,
And orators from Athens sprung.

'Observe but in these neighbouring lands
The different use of mouths and hands;
As men repos'd their various hopes,
In battles these, and those in tropes.

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'In Britain's isles, as Heylin notes,
The ladies trip in petticoats,
Which, for the honour of their nation,
They quit but on some great occasion:
Men there in breeches clad you view;
They claim that garment as their due.
In Turkey the reverse appears;
Long coats the haughty husband wears,
And greets his wife with angry speeches,
If she be seen without her breeches.

'In our fantastic climes, the fair
With cleanly powder dry their hair,
And round their lovely breast and head
Fresh flowers their mingled odours shed:
Your nicer Hottentots think meet
With guts and tripe to deck their feet!
With downcast looks on Totta's legs
The ogling youth most humbly begs
She would not from his hopes remove
At once his breakfast and his love;
And if the skittish nymph should fly,
He in a double sense must die.

'We simple toasters take delight
To see our women's teeth look white,
And every saucy ill-bred fellow
Sneers at a mouth profoundly yellow.
In China none hold women sweet
Except their snags are black as jet:
King Chihu put nine queens to death,
Convict on statute, *ivory teeth.*

'At Tonquin if a prince should die,
(As Jesuits write, who never lie)
The wife, and counsellor, and priest,
Who serv'd him most and lov'd him best,

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Prepare and light his funeral fire,
And cheerful on the pile expire.
In Europe 'twould be hard to find
In each degree one half so kind.
'Now turn we to the farthest East,
And there observe the gentry dress'd.
Prince Giolo and his royal sisters,
Scar'd with ten thousand comely blisters,
The marks remaining on the skin,
To tell the quality within:
Distinguish'd flashes deck the great,
As each excels in birth or state;
His eyelet-holes are more and ampler:
The king's own body was a sampler.
Happy the climate where the beau
Wears the same suit for use and show;
And at a small expense your wife,
If once well pink'd, is cloth'd for life.
'Westward again, the Indian fair
Is nicely smear'd with fat of bear:
Before you see, you smell your toast,
And sweetest she who stinks the most.
The finest sparks and cleanest beaux
Drip from the shoulders to the toes.
How sleek their skins! their joints how easy!
There slovens only are not greasy.
'I mention'd different ways of breeding:
Begin we in our children's reading.
To Master John the English maid
A horn-book gives of gingerbread,
And that the child may learn the better,
As he can name, he eats the letter;
Proceeding thus with vast delight,
He spells and gnaws from left to right.

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But show a Hebrew's hopeful son
Where we suppose the book begun,
The child would thank you for your kindness,
And read quite backward from our *finis:*
Devour he learning ne'er so fast,
Great A would be reserv'd the last.
'An equal instance of this matter
Is in the manners of a daughter.
In Europe if a harmless maid,
By Nature and by Love betray'd,
Should, ere a wife, become a nurse,
Her friends would look on her the worse.
In China, Dampier's Travels tell ye,
(Look in his index for Pagelli)
Soon as the British ships unmoor,
And jolly longboat rows to shore,
Down come the nobles of the land,
Each brings his daughter in his hand,
Beseeching the imperious tar
To make her but one hour his care;
The tender mother stands affrighted,
Lest her dear daughter should be slighted;
And poor Miss Yaya dreads the shame
Of going back the maid she came.
'Observe how custom, Dick, compels
The lady that in Europe dwells:
After her tea she slips away,
And what to do, one need not say.
Now see how great Pomonque's queen
Behav'd herself amongst the men;
Pleas'd with her punch, the gallant soul
First drank, then water'd in the bowl,
And sprinkled in the captain's face
The marks of her peculiar grace—

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'To close this point, we need not roam
For instances so far from home.
What parts gay France from sober Spain?
A little rising rocky chain.
Of men born south or north o' the hill,
Those seldom move, these ne'er stand still.
Dick, you love maps, and may perceive
Rome not far distant from Geneve.
If the good Pope remains at home,
He's the first prince in Christendom.
Choose then, good Pope, at home to stay,
Nor westward, curious, take thy way;
Thy way, unhappy, shouldst thou take
From Tiber's bank to Leman-lake,
Thou art an aged priest no more,
But a young flaring painted whore:
Thy sex is lost; thy town is gone;
No longer Rome, but Babylon.
That some few leagues should make this change,
To men unlearn'd seems mighty strange.
'But need we, friend, insist on this?
Since in the very Cantons Swiss,
All your philosophers agree,
And prove it plain, that one may be
A heretic or true believer,
On this or t'other side a river.'
Here with an artful smile, quoth Dick,
'Your proofs come mighty full and thick—'
The bard, on this extensive chapter
Wound up into poetic rapture,
Continued: 'Richard, cast your eye
By night upon a winter-sky;
Cast it by day-light on the strand
Which compasses fair Albion's land;

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If you can count the stars that glow
Above, or sands that lie below,
Into these common-places look,
Which from great authors I have took,
And count the proofs I have collected,
To have my writings well protected:
These I lay by for time of need,
And thou may'st at thy leisure read:
For standing every critic's rage,
I safely will to future age
My System, as a gift, bequeath,
Victorious over spite and death.'

CANTO III.

Richard, who now was half asleep,
Rous'd, nor would longer silence keep;
And sense like this, in vocal breath,
Broke from his twofold hedge of teeth.
Now if this phrase too harsh be thought,
Pope, tell the world 'tis not my fault;
Old Homer taught us thus to speak:
If 'tis not sense, at least 'tis Greek.
'As folks, (quoth Richard) prone to leasing,
Say things at first because they're pleasing,
Then prove what they have once asserted,
Nor care to have their lie deserted,
Till their own dreams at length deceive them,
And, oft repeating, they believe them;
Or as, again, those amorous blades
Who trifle with their mothers' maids,
Though at the first their wild desire
Was but to quench a present fire,

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Yet if the object of their love
Chance by Lucina's aid to prove,—
They seldom let the bantling roar
In basket at a neighbour's door,
But by the flattering glass of Nature
Viewing themselves in Cakebread's feature,
With serious thought and care support
What only was begun in sport:
Just so with you, my friend, it fares,
Who deal in philosophic wares;
Atoms you cut, and forms you measure,
To gratify your private pleasure,
Till airy seeds of casual wit
Do some fantastic birth beget:
And pleas'd to find your system mended
Beyond what you at first intended,
The happy whimsey you pursue,
Till you at length believe it true:
Caught by your own delusive art,
You fancy first, and then assert.'
Quoth Matthew; 'Friend, as far as I
Through Art or Nature cast my eye,
This axiom clearly I discern,
That one must teach and t' other learn.
No fool Pythagoras was thought;
Whilst he his weighty doctrines taught,
He made his listening scholars stand,
Their mouth still cover'd with their hand;
Else, may be, some odd-thinking youth,
Less friend to doctrine than to truth,
Might have refus'd to let his ears
Attend the music of the spheres,
Denied all transmigrating scenes,
And introduc'd the use of beans.

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From great Lucretius take his void,
And all the world is quite destroy'd.
Deny Descartes his subtile matter,
You leave him neither fire nor water.
How oddly would Sir Isaac look,
If you, in answer to his book,
Say in the front of your discourse,
That things have no elastic force?
How could our chymic friends go on
To find the philosophic stone,
If you more powerful reasons bring
To prove that there is no such thing?

'Your chiefs in sciences and arts
Have great contempt of Alma's parts:
They find she giddy is, or dull,
She doubts if things are void or full;
And who should be presum'd to tell
What she herself should see or feel?
She doubts if two and two make four,
Though she has told them ten times o'er.
It can't—it may be—and it must;
To which of these must Alma trust?
Nay, further yet they make her go,
In doubting if she doubts or no.
Can syllogism set things right?
No; majors soon with minors fight;
Or, both in friendly consort join'd,
The consequence limps false behind.
So to some cunning man she goes,
And asks of him how much she knows;
With patience grave he hears her speak,
And from his short notes gives her back
What from her tale he comprehended;
Thus the dispute is wisely ended.

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From the account the loser brings,
The conjuror knows who stole the things.'
''Squire (interrupted Dick) since when
Were you amongst these cunning men?"
'Dear Dick, (quoth Mat) let not thy force
Of eloquence spoil my discourse:
I tell thee this is Alma's case,
Still asking what some wise man says,
Who does his mind in words reveal,
Which all must grant, though few can spell.
You tell your doctor that you're ill,
And what does he but write a bill?
Of which you need not read one letter;
The worse the scrawl, the dose the better;
For if you knew but what you take,
Though you recover, he must break.
'Ideas, forms, and intellects,
Have furnish'd out three different sects.
Substance or accident divides
All Europe into adverse sides.
'Now as, engag'd in arms or laws,
You must have friends to back your cause,
In philosophic matters so
Your judgment must with others go:
For as in senates so in schools,
Majority of voices rules.
'Poor Alma, like a lonely deer,
O'er hills and dales does doubtful err:
With panting haste and quick surprise,
From every leaf that stirs she flies,
Till mingled with the neighbouring herd,
She slights what erst she singly fear'd,
And now exempt from doubt and dread,
She dares pursue if they dare lead;

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As their example still prevails,
She tempts the stream, or leaps the pales.'
'He, then, (quoth Dick) who by your rule
Thinks for himself, becomes a fool;
As party-man who leaves the rest,
Is call'd but whimsical* at best.
Now, by your favour, Master Mat,
Like Ralpho, here I smell a rat.
I must be listed in your sect,
Who, though they teach not, can protect.'
'Right, Richard, (Mat in triumph cried)
So put off all mistrust and pride;
And while my principles I beg,
Pray answer only with your leg.
Believe what friendly I advise;
Be first secure, and then be wise.
The man within the coach that sits,
And to another's skill submits,
Is safer much (whate'er arrives)
And warmer too, than he that drives.
'So, Dick adept, tuck back thy hair,
And I will pour into thy ear
Remarks, which none did e'er disclose
In smooth-pac'd verse, or hobbling prose.
Attend, dear Dick, but dont reply,
And thou may'st prove as wise as I.
'When Alma now in different ages
Has finish'd her ascending stages,
Into the head at length she gets,
And there in public grandeur sits,
To judge of things, and censure wits.

* Some of the Tories in the reign of Queen Anne were distinguished by that appellation.

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'Here, Richard, how could I explain
The various labyrinth of the brain!
Surprise my readers, whilst I tell them
Of *cerebrum* and *cerebellum?*
How could I play the commentator
On *dura* and on *pia mater?*
Where hot and cold, and dry and wet,
Strive each the other's place to get,
And with incessant toil and strife
Would keep possession during life?
I could demonstrate every pore
Where Memory lays up all her store,
And to an inch compute the station
'Twixt judgment and imagination:
O friend! I could display much learning,
At least to men of small discerning.
The brain contains ten thousand cells,
In each some active fancy dwells,
Which always is at work, and framing
The several follies I was naming.
As in a hive's vimineous* dome,
Ten thousand bees enjoy their home,
Each does her studious action vary,
To go and come, to fetch and carry:
Each still renews her little labour,
Nor jostles her assiduous neighbour;
Each—Whilst this thesis I maintain,
I fancy, Dick, I know thy brain.
O, with the mighty theme affected,
Could I but see thy head dissected!'
'My head, (quoth Dick) to serve your whim?
Spare that, and take some other limb.

* Made of twigs or wicker.

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Sir, in your nice affairs of System,
Wise men propose, but fools assist them.'
Says Matthew; 'Richard, keep thy head,
And hold thy peace, and I'll proceed.'
'Proceed? (quoth Dick) Sir, I aver
You have already gone too far.
When people once are in the wrong,
Each line they add is much too long.
Who fastest walks, but walks astray,
Is only furthest from his way.
Bless your conceits! must I believe,
Howe'er absurd, what you conceive,
And for your friendship live and die
A papist in philosophy?
I say whatever you maintain
Of Alma in the heart or brain,
The plainest man alive may tell ye
Her seat of empire is the belly;
From hence she sends out those supplies
Which make us either stout or wise;
The strength of every other member
Is founded on your belly-timber:
The qualms or raptures of your blood
Rise in proportion to your food;
And if you would improve your thought,
You must be fed as well as taught:
Your stomach makes your fabric roll,
Just as the bias rules the bowl.
That great Achilles might employ
The strength designed to ruin Troy,
He din'd on lion's marrow, spread
On toasts of ammunition bread;
But by his mother sent away
Amongst the Thracian girls to play,

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Effeminate he sat, and quiet;
Strange product of a cheesecake diet!
Now give my argument fair play,
And take the thing the other way.
The youngster who at nine and three
Drinks with his sisters milk and tea,
From breakfast reads, till twelve o'clock,
Burnet and Heylin, Hobbes and Locke;
He pays due visits after noon,
To Cousin Al'ce and Uncle John;
At ten, from coffeehouse or play,
Returning finishes the day:
But give him port and potent sack,
From milksop he starts up Mohack;
Holds that the happy know no hours;
So through the street at midnight scours;
Breaks watchmen's heads, and chairmen's glasses,
And thence proceeds to nicking sashes;
Till by some tougher hand o'ercome,
And first knock'd down, and then led home,
He damns the footman, strikes the maid,
And decently reels up to bed.
'Observe the various operations
Of food and drink in several nations.
Was ever Tartar fierce or cruel
Upon the strength of watergruel?
But who shall stand his rage and force,
If first he rides, then eats his horse?
Salads and eggs, and lighter fare,
Tune the Italian sparks guitar:
And, if I take Dan Congreve right,
Pudding and beef make Britons fight.
Tokay and coffee cause this work
Between the German and the Turk;

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And both, as they provisions want,
Chicane, avoid, retire, and faint.
'Hunger and thirst, or guns and swords,
Give the same death in different words:
To push this argument no further,
To starve a man in law is murther.
'As in a watch's fine machine
Though many artful springs are seen,
The added movements, which declare
How full the moon, how old the year,
Derive their secondary power
From that which simply points the hour:
For though those gimcracks were away,
(Quare would not swear, but Quare would say,)
However more reduc'd and plain,
The watch would still a watch remain;
But if the horal orbit ceases,
The whole stands still, or breaks to pieces;
Is now no longer what it was,
And you may e'en go sell the case.
So if, unprejudic'd, you scan
The goings of this clockwork, Man;
You find a hundred movements made
By fine devices in his head;
But 'tis the stomach's solid stroke
That tells his being what's o'clock.
If you take off his rhetoric-trigger,
He talks no more in mood and figure;
Or, clog his mathematic-wheel,
His buildings fall, his ship stands still:
Or, lastly, break his politic-weight,
His voice no longer rules the state:
Yet if these finer whims were gone,
Your clock, though plain, would still go on;

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But spoil the engine of digestion,
And you entirely change the question.
Alma's affairs no power can mend;
The jest, alas! is at an end;
Soon ceases all this worldly bustle,
And you consign the corpse to Russel.*
'Now make your Alma come or go,
From leg to hand, from top to toe,
Your System, without my addition,
Is in a very sad condition.
So Harlequin extoll'd his horse
Fit for the war, or road, or course;
His mouth was soft, his eye was good,
His foot was sure as ever trod;
One fault he had, a fault indeed;
And what was that? the horse was dead.'
'Dick, from these instances and fetches
Thou mak'st of horses, clocks, and watches,
(Quoth Mat,) to me thou seem'st to mean
That Alma is a mere machine;
That telling others what's o'clock,
She knows not what herself has struck,
But leaves to standers-by the trial
Of what is mark'd upon her dial.'
'Here hold; a blow, good friend, (quoth Dick,)
And rais'd his voice exceeding quick.
Fight fair, sir: what I never meant,
Don't you infer. In argument
Similes are like songs in love:
They much describe, they nothing prove.'
Mat, who was here a little gravell'd,
Toss'd up his nose, and would have cavill'd:

* A popular undertaker, mentioned also by Garth, in his Dispensary.

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But calling Hermes to his aid,
Half pleas'd, half angry, thus he said:
  Where mind ('tis for the author's fame)
That Matthew call'd, and Hermes came.
In danger heroes, and in doubt,
Poets find gods to help them out.
  'Friend Richard, I begin to see
That you and I shall scarce agree.
Observe how oddly you behave;
The more I grant, the more you crave:
But, comrade, as I said just now,
I should affirm, and you allow.
We system-makers can sustain
The thesis which you grant was plain,
And with remarks and comments teaze ye,
In case the thing before was easy:
But in a point obscure and dark,
We fight as Leibnitz did with Clarke;
And when no reason we can show
Why matters this or that way go,
The shortest way the thing we try,
And what we know not, we deny:
True to our own o'erbearing pride,
And false to all the world beside.
  'That old philosopher grew cross,
Who could not tell what motion was;
Because he walk'd against his will,
He fac'd men down that he stood still.
And he who reading on the heart
(When all his *quodlibets* of art
Could not expound its pulse and heat)
Swore he had never felt it beat.
Chrysippus, foil'd by Epicurus,
Makes bold (Jove bless him!) to assure us.

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That all things which our mind can view
May be at once both false and true.
And Malbranche has an odd conceit
As ever enter'd Frenchman's pate:
Says he, "So little can our mind
Of matter or of spirit find,
That we by guess, at least, may gather
Something which may be both or neither."
Faith, Dick, I must confess 'tis true
(But this is only *entre nous*)
That many knotty points there are
Which all discuss, but few can clear;
As Nature slily had thought fit,
For some by-ends to cross-bite wit:
Circles to square, and cubes to double,
Would give a man excessive trouble:
The longitude uncertain roams,
In spite of Whiston and his bombs.
What system, Dick, has right averr'd
The cause why woman has no beard?
Or why, as years our frame attack,
Our hairs grow white, our teeth grow black?
In points like these we must agree
Our barber knows as much as we:
Yet still unable to explain,
We must persist the best we can;
With care our systems still renew,
And prove things likely, though not true.
'I could, thou see'st, in quaint dispute,
By dint of logic, strike thee mute;
With learned skill now push, now parry,
From Darii to Bocardo vary,
And never yield, or, what is worst,
Never conclude the point discours'd:

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Yet that you, *hic et nunc*, may know
How much you to my candour owe,
I'll from the disputant descend,
To show thee I assume the friend:
I'll take thy notion for my own—
(So most philosophers have done)
It makes my system more complete:
Dick, can it have a nobler fate?"
'Take what thou wilt, (said Dick) dear friend,
But bring thy matters to an end.'
'I find, (quoth Mat) reproof is vain;
Who first offend will first complain.
Thou wishest I should make to shore,
Yet still putt'st in thy thwarting oar.
What I have told thee fifty times
In prose, receive for once in rhymes.
A huge fat man in country-fair
Or city-church, (no matter where)
Labour'd and push'd amidst the crowd,
Still bawling out extremely loud,
"Lord save us! why do people press!"
Another marking his distress,
Friendly replied; "Plump gentleman,
Get out as fast as e'er you can;
Or cease to push or to exclaim;
You make the very crowd you blame".'
Says Dick, 'Your moral does not need
The least return, so e'en proceed:
Your tale, howe'er applied, was short:
So far, at least, I thank you for't.'
Mat took his thanks, and in a tone
More magisterial thus went on:
'Now Alma settles in the head,
As has before been sung or said:

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And here begins this farce of life;
Enter Revenge, Ambition, Strife;
Behold on both sides men advance,
To form in earnest Bays's dance.
L'Avare, not using half his store,
Still grumbles that he has no more;
Strikes not the present tun, for fear
The vintage should be bad next year,
And eats to-day with inward sorrow,
And dread of fancied want to-morrow.
Abroad if the surtout you wear
Repels the rigour of the air,
Would you be warmer if at home?
You had the fabric and the loom?
And if two boots keep out the weather,
What need you have two hides of leather?
Could Pedro, think you, make no trial
Of a sonata on his viol,
Unless he had the total gut
Whence every string at first was cut?
'When Rarus shows you his Cartone,
He always tells you, with a groan,
Where two of that same hand were torn,
Long before you or he were born.
'Poor Vento's mind so much is cross'd,
For part of his Petronius lost,
That he can never take the pains
To understand what yet remains.
'What toil did honest Curio take,
What strict inquiries did he make,
To get one medal, wanting yet,
And perfect all his Roman set?
'Tis found: and, O, his happy lot!
'Tis bought, lock'd up, and lies forgot:

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Of these no more you hear him speak;
He now begins upon the Greek.
These rang'd and show'd, shall in their turns
Remain obscure as in their urns.
My copper lamps at any rate,
  For being true antique, I bought,
Yet wisely melted down my plate,
  On modern models to be wrought,
And trifles I alike pursue,
Because they're old, because they're new.
  'Dick, I have seen you with delight
For Georgy* make a paper kite,
And simple odes, too many, show ye
My servile complaisance to Chloe.
Parents and lovers are decreed
By Nature fools'—'That's brave indeed!
(Quoth Dick) such truths are worth receiving:'
Yet Still Dick look'd as not believing.
  'Now, Alma, to divines and prose
I leave thy frauds, and crimes, and woes,
Nor think to-night of thy ill-nature,
But of thy follies, idle creature,
The turns of thy uncertain wing,
And not the malice of thy sting.
Thy pride of being great and wise
I do but mention to despise;
I view with anger and disdain
How little gives thee joy or pain:
A print, a bronze, a flower, a root,
A shell, a butterfly, can do't:
Even a romance, a tune, a rhyme,
Help thee to pass the tedious time,

* The son of Mr. Richard Shelton.

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Which else would on thy hand remain;
Though flown, it n'er looks back again:
And cards are dealt, and chess-boards brought,
To ease the pain of coward thought:
Happy result of human wit!
That Alma may herself forget.
'Dick, thus we act, and thus we are,
Or toss'd by hope or sunk by care.
With endless pain this man pursues
What, if he gain'd, he could not use;
And t' other fondly hopes to see
What never was, nor e'er shall be.
We err by use, go wrong by rules,
In gesture grave, in action fools:
We join hypocrisy to pride,
Doubling the faults we strive to hide.
Or grant that with extreme surprise
We find ourselves at sixty wise.
And twenty pretty things are known,
Of which we can't accomplish one;
Whilst as my system, says the Mind
Is to these upper rooms confin'd;
Should I, my friend, at large repeat
Her borrow'd sense, her fond conceit,
The bead-roll of her vicious tricks,
My poem would be too prolix:
For could I my remarks sustain,
Like Socrates, or Miles Montagne,
Who in these times would read my books,
But Tom o' Stiles or John o' Nokes?
'As Brentford kings discreet and wise,
After long thought and grave advice,
Into Lardella's coffin peeping,
Saw naught to cause their mirth or weeping;

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So Alma, now to joy or grief
Superior, finds her late relief;
Wearied of being high or great,
And nodding in her chair of state,
Stun'd and worn out with endless chat,
Of Will did this, and Nan said that,
She finds, poor thing, some little crack,
Which Nature forc'd by time must make,
Through which she wings her destin'd way;
Upward she soars, and down drops clay;
While some surviving friend supplies
Hic jacet, and a hundred lies.

'O Richard, till that day appears
Which must decide our hopes and fears,
Would Fortune calm her present rage,
And give us playthings for our age;
Would Clotho wash her hands in milk,
And twist our thread with gold and silk;
Would she in friendship, peace, and plenty,
Spin out our years to four times twenty;
And should we both in this condition,
Have conquer'd love, and worse ambition;
(Else those two passions, by the way,
May chance to show us scurvy play)
Then, Richard, then should we sit down,
Far from the tumult of this Town;
I, fond of my well-chosen seat,
My pictures, medals, books complete;
Or, should we mix our friendly talk,
O'ershaded in that favourite walk
Which thy own hand had whilom planted,
Both pleas'd with all we thought we wanted;
Yet then, ev'n then, one cross reflection
Would spoil thy grove and my collection:

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Thy son and his ere that may die,
And time some uncouth heir supply,
Who shall for nothing else be known,
But spoiling all that thou hast done.
Who set the twigs, shall he remember
That is in haste to sell the timber?
And what shall of thy woods remain,
Except the box that threw the main?
'Nay, may not time and death remove
The near relations whom I love?
And my Coz Tom, or his Coz Mary,
(Who hold the plough or skim the dairy)
My favourite books and pictures sell
To Smart, or Doiley, by the ell?
Kindly throw in a little figure,
And set their price upon the bigger?
Those who could never read their grammar,
When my dear volumes touch the hammer,
May think books best as richest bound:
My copper medals by the pound
May be with learned justice weigh'd;
To turn the balance, Otho's head
May be thrown in; and, for the mettle,
The coin may mend a tinker's kettle——
Tir'd with these thoughts'—'Less tir'd than I,
(Quoth Dick) with your philosophy—
That people live and die, I knew
An hour ago as well as you;
And if fate spins us longer years,
Or is in haste to take the shears,
I know we must both fortunes try,
And bear our evils wet or dry.
Yet let the goddess smile or frown,
Bread we shall eat, or white or brown,

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And in a cottage or a court
Drink fine champagne or muddled port.
What need of books these truths to tell,
Which folks perceive who cannot spell?
And must we spectacles apply
To view what hurts our naked eye?
'Sir, if it be your wisdom's aim,
To make me merrier than I am,
I'll be all night at your devotion——
Come on, friend; broach the pleasing notion;
But if you would depress my thought,
Your system is not worth a groat——
'For Plato's fancies what care I?
I hope you would not have me die,
Like simple Cato in the play,
For any thing that he can say?
E'en let him of ideas speak
To heathens in his native Greek:
If to be sad is to be wise,
I do most heartily despise
Whatever Socrates has said,
Or Tully writ, or Wanley* read.
'Dear Drift,† to set our matters right,
Remove these papers from my sight;
Burn Mat's Descartes and Aristotle:—
Here, Jonathan, your master's bottle.'

* Humphrey Wanley, the learned librarian to Lord Oxford.
† Adrian Drift, Esq. Mr. Prior's secretary and executor.

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TALES.

THE

TURTLE AND SPARROW.

AN ELEGIAC TALE.*

Behind an unfrequented glade,
Where yew and myrtle mix their shade,
A widow Turtle pensive sate,
And wept her murder'd lover's fate.
The Sparrow chanc'd that way to walk,
(A bird that loves to chirp and talk)
Be sure he did the Turtle greet,
She answer'd him as she thought meet:
Sparrows and Turtles, by the by,
Can think as well as you or I;
But how they did their thoughts express,
The margin shows by T. and S.
T. My hopes are lost, my joys are fled,
Alas! I weep Columbo dead:
Come, all ye winged lovers, come,
Drop pinks and daisies on his tomb;
Sing, Philomel, his funeral verse,
Ye pious Redbreasts, deck his hearse;
Fair Swans, extend your dying throats,
Columbo's death requires your notes;

* This piece was written upon the sincere affection shown by Queen Anne for the loss of her royal consort, Prince George of Denmark, 1708.

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For him, my friend, for him I moan,
My dear Columbo, dead and gone.
Stretch'd on the bier Columbo lies,
Pale are his cheeks, and clos'd his eyes;
Those cheeks, where Beauty smiling lay,
Those eyes, where Love was us'd to play;
Ah! cruel Fate, alas! how soon
That beauty, and those joys, are flown!
  Columbo is no more: ye Floods,
Bear the sad sound to distant woods;
The sound let Echo's voice restore,
And say, Columbo is no more.
Ye Floods, ye Woods, ye Echoes, moan
My dear Columbo, dead and gone.
  The Dryads all forsook the wood,
And mournful Naiads round me stood,
The tripping Fawns and Fairies came,
All conscious of our mutual flame,
To sigh for him, with me to moan,
My dear Columbo, dead and gone.
  Venus disdain'd not to appear,
To lend my grief a friendly ear;
But what avails her kindness now?
She ne'er shall hear my second vow:
The Loves, that round their mother flew,
Did in her face her sorrows view;
Their drooping wings they pensive hung,
Their arrows broke, their bows unstrung;
They heard attentive what I said,
And wept, with me, Columbo dead:
For him I sigh, for him I moan,
My dear Columbo, dead and gone.
  'Tis ours to weep,' great Venus said,
'Tis Jove's alone, to be obey'd;

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Nor birds nor goddesses can move
The just behests of fatal Jove:
I saw thy mate with sad regret,
And curs'd the fowler's cruel net;
Ah, dear Columbo, how he fell,
Whom Turturella lov'd so well!
I saw him bleeding on the ground,
The sight tore up my ancient wound!
And whilst you wept, alas! I cried,
Columbo and Adonis died.'

Weep, all ye Streams, ye Mountains, groan;
I mourn Columbo, dead and gone;
Still let my tender grief complain,
Nor day nor night that grief restrain;
I said, and Venus still replied,
'Columbo and Adonis died.'

S. Poor Turturella, hard thy case,
And just thy tears, alas! alas!

T. And hast thou lov'd, and canst thou hear
With piteous heart a lover's care?
Come, then, with me thy sorrows join,
And ease my woes by telling thine;
For thou, poor bird, perhaps may'st moan
Some Passerella, dead and gone.

S. Dame Turtle, this runs soft in rhyme,
But neither suits the place nor time;
The fowler's hand, whose cruel care
For dear Columbo set the snare,
The snare again for thee may set;
Two birds may perish in one net:
Thou should'st avoid this cruel field,
And sorrow should to prudence yield.
Tis sad to die—

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T.——It may be so;
'Tis sadder yet to live in woe.
S. When widows use their canting strain,
They seem resolv'd to wed again.
T. When widowers would this truth disprove,
They never tasted real love.
S. Love is soft joy and gentle strife,
His efforts all depend on life:
When he has thrown two golden darts,
And struck the lovers' mutual hearts,
Of his black shafts let Death send one,
Alas! the pleasing game is done;
Ill is the poor survivor sped,
A corpse feels mighty cold in bed.
Venus said right, 'Nor tears can move,
Nor plaints revoke, the will of Jove.'
All must obey the general doom,
Down from Alcides to Tom Thumb.
Grim Pluto will not be withstood
By force or craft. Tall Robinhood,
As well as little John, is dead,
(You see how deeply I am read)
With fate's lean tipstaff none can dodge,
He'll find you out where'er you lodge.
Ajax, to shun his general power,
In vain absconded in a flower:
An idle scene Tythonus acted,
When to a grasshopper contracted;
Death struck them in those shapes again,
As once he did when they were men.
For reptiles perish, plants decay;
Flesh is but grass, grass turns to hay,
And hay to dung, and dung to clay.

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Thus heads extremely nice discover,
That folks may die some ten times over;
But oft, by too refin'd a touch,
To prove things plain, they prove too much.
Whate'er Pythagoras may say,
(For each, you know, will have his way)
With great submission I pronounce,
That people die no more than once:
But once is sure, and death is common
To bird and man, including woman:
From the spread eagle to the wren,
Alas! no mortal fowl knows when.
All that wear feathers, first or last,
Must one day perch on Charon's mast;
Must lie beneath the cypress shade,
Where Strada's nightingale was laid.
Those fowl who seem alive to sit,
Assembled by Dan Chaucer's wit,
In prose have slept three hundred years,
Exempt from worldy hopes and fears,
And, laid in state upon their hearse,
Are truly but embalm'd in verse.
As sure as Lesbia's Sparrow I,
Thou sure as Prior's Dove, must die;
And ne'er again from Lethe's streams
Return to Addua or to Thames.

T. I therefore weep Columbo dead,
My hopes bereav'd, my pleasures fled;
I therefore must for ever moan
My dear Columbo, dead and gone.

S. Columbo never sees your tears,
Your cries Columbo never hears;
A wall of brass, and one of lead,
Divide the living from the dead:

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Repell'd by this, the gather'd rain
Of tears beats back to earth again;
In t' other the collected sound
Of groans, when once receiv'd, is drown'd.
'Tis therefore vain one hour to grieve
What time itself can ne'er retrieve.
By nature soft, I know a dove
Can never live without her love;
Then quit this flame, and light another,
Dame, I advise you like a brother.
T. What, I to make a second choice!
In other nuptials to rejoice!
S. Why not, my bird?—
T.——No, Sparrow, no;
Let me indulge my pleasing woe:
Thus sighing, cooing, ease my pain,
But never wish nor love again:
Distress'd for ever let me moan
My dear Columbo, dead and gone.
S. Our winged friends, through all the grove,
Contemn thy mad excess of love:
I tell thee, Dame, the other day
I met a parrot and a jay,
Who mock'd thee in their mimic tone,
And wept Columbo, dead and gone.
T. Whate'er the jay or parrot said,
My hopes are lost, my joys are fled,
And I for ever must deplore
Columbo, dead and gone.—*S.* Encore!
For shame, forsake this Bion-style;
We'll talk an hour, and walk a mile.
Does it with sense or health agree,
To sit thus moping on a tree?
To throw away a widow's life,
When you again may be a wife;

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Come on, I'll tell you my amours;
Who knows but they may influence your's?
Example draws where precept fails,
And sermons are less read than tales.
T. Sparrow, I take thee for my friend;
As such will hear thee: I descend;
Hop on and talk; but, honest bird,
Take care that no immodest word
May venture to offend my ear.
S. Too saint-like Turtle, never fear.
By method things are best discuss'd,
Begin we then with wife the first:
A handsome, senseless, awkward fool,
Who would not yield, and could not rule;
Her actions did her charms disgrace,
And still her tongue talk'd of her face;
Count me the leaves on yonder tree,
So many different wills had she,
And, like the leaves, as chance inclin'd,
Those wills were chang'd with every wind:
She courted the *beau-monde* to-night,
L'assemblee her supreme delight;
The next she sat immur'd, unseen,
And in full health enjoy'd the spleen;
She censur'd that, she alter'd this,
And with great care set all amiss;
She now could chide, now laugh, now cry,
Now sing, now pout, all God knows why:
Short was her reign, she cough'd and died;—
Proceed we to my second bride:
Well born she was, genteely bred,
And buxom both at board and bed;
Glad to oblige, and pleas'd to please,
And, as Tom Southern wisely says,

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'No other fault had she in life,
But only that she was my wife.'*
O widow Turtle! every she,
(So Nature's pleasure does decree)
Appears a goddess till enjoy'd;
But birds, and men, and gods, are cloy'd.
Was Hercules one woman's man?
Or Jove for ever Leda's swan?
Ah! Madam, cease to be mistaken,
Few married fowl peck Dunmow-bacon.
Variety alone gives joy;
The sweetest meats the soonest cloy.
What Sparrow-dame, what Dove alive,
Though Venus should the chariot drive,
But would accuse the harness' weight,
If always coupled to one mate;
And often wish the fetter broke?
'Tis freedom but to change the yoke.
T. Impious, to wish to wed again,
Ere death dissolv'd the former chain!
S. Spare your remark, and hear the rest,
She brought me sons, but, Jove be bless'd,
She died in childbed, on the nest.
Well, rest her bones, quoth I, she's gone;
But must I therefore lie alone?
What, am I to her memory tied?
Must I not live, because she died?
And thus I logically said,
('Tis good to have a reasoning head)
Is this my wife? *probatur*, not;
For death dissolv'd the marriage-knot:
She was, *concedo*, during life;
But is a piece of clay a wife?

* See the Wife's Excuse, a comedy.

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Again, if not wife, do ye see,
Why then no kin at all to me;
And he who general tears can shed
For folks that happen to be dead,
May e'en with equal justice mourn
For those, who never yet were born.
T. Those points, indeed, you quaintly prove;
But logic is no friend to love.
S. My children then were just pen-feather'd;
Some little corn for them I gather'd,
And sent them to my spouse's mother,
So left that brood to get another;
And as old Harry whilom said,
Reflecting on Anne Boleyn dead,
'Cocksbones, I now again do stand
The jolliest bachelor i' th' land.'
T. Ah me! my joys, my hopes, are fled;
My first, my only love, is dead;
With endless grief let me bemoan
Columbo's loss——
S. ——Let me go on.
As yet my fortune was but narrow;
I woo'd my cousin, Philly Sparrow,
O' th' elder house of Chirping-End,
From whence the younger branch descend.
Well seated in a field of pease
She liv'd, extremely at her ease;
But when the honey-moon was pass'd,
The following nights were soon o'ercast;
She kept her own, could plead the law,
And quarrel for a barley-straw:
Both, you may judge, became less kind,
As more we knew each other's mind.

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She soon grew sullen; I, hard-hearted;
We scolded, hated, fought, and parted,
To London, blessed town! I went;
She boarded at a farm in Kent:
A magpie from the country fled,
And kindly told me—she was dead;
I prun'd my feathers, cock'd my tail,
And set my heart again to sale.

My fourth, a mere coquette, or such
I thought her; nor avails it much,
If true or false: our troubles spring
More from the fancy than the thing.
Two staring horns, I often said,
But ill become a Sparrow's head;
But then to set that balance even,
Your cuckold-Sparrow goes to heaven.
The thing you fear, suppose it done,
If you inquire, you make it known:
Whilst at the root your horns are sore,
The more you scratch they ache the more.
But turn the tables and reflect,
All may not be that you suspect:
By the mind's eye, the horns we mean
Are only in ideas seen;
'Tis from the inside of the head
Their branches shoot, their antlers spread;
Fruitful suspicions often bear them;
You feel them from the time you fear them.
Cuckoo! Cuckoo! that echo'd word
Offends the ear of vulgar bird;
But those of finer taste have found
There's nothing in't beside the sound.
Preferment always waits on horns,
And household peace the gift adorns:

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This way or that let factions tend,
The spark is still the cuckold's friend:
This way or that let madam roam,
Well pleas'd and quiet she comes home.
Now weigh the pleasure with the pain,
The *plus* and *minus*, loss and gain;
And what La Fontaine laughing says,
Is serious truth in such a case:
'Who slights the evil, finds it least;
And who does nothing, does the best.'
I never strove to rule the roast,
She ne'er refus'd to pledge my toast:
In visits if we chanc'd to meet,
I seem'd obliging, she discreet:
We neither much caress'd nor strove,
But good dissembling pass'd for love.

T. Whate'er of light our eye may know,
'Tis only light itself can show;
Whate'er of love our heart can feel,
'Tis mutual love alone can tell.

S. My pretty, amorous, foolish bird,
A moment's patience.—In one word,
The three kind Sisters broke the chain;
She died, I mourn'd, and woo'd again.

T. Let me with juster grief deplore
My dear Columbo, now no more;
Let me with constant tears bewail—

S. Your sorrow does but spoil my tale.
My fifth she prov'd a jealous wife,
Lord shield us all from such a life!
'Twas doubt, complaint, reply, chit-chat,
'Twas this to-day, to-morrow that.
Sometimes, forsooth, upon the brook
I kept a miss; an honest rook

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Told it a snipe, who told a steer,
Who told it those who told it her.
One day a linnet and a lark
Had met me strolling in the dark;
The next, a woodcock and an owl,
Quick-sighted, grave, and sober fowl,
Would on their corporal oath allege
I kiss'd a hen behind the hedge.
Well, Madam Turtle; to be brief,
(Repeating but renews our grief)
As once she watch'd me from a rail,
Poor soul! her footing chanc'd to fail,
And down she fell and broke her hip;
The fever came, and then the pip:
Death did the only cure apply;
She was at quiet, so was I.
T. Could Love unmov'd these changes view?
His sorrows, as his joys, are true.
S. My dearest Dove, one wise man says,
Alluding to our present case,
'We're here to-day, and gone to-morrow;'
Then what avails superfluous sorrow?
Another, full as wise as he,
Adds, that 'a married man may see
Two happy hours;' and which are they?
The first and last, perhaps you'll say:
'Tis true, when blithe she goes to bed,
And when she peaceably lies dead;
'Women 'twixt sheets are best,' 'tis said,
Be they of holland or of lead.
Now cur'd of Hymen's hopes and fears,
And sliding down the vale of years,
I hop'd to fix my future rest,
And took a widow to my nest.

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Ah, Turtle! had she been like thee,
Sober, yet gentle; wise, yet free;
But she was peevish, noisy, bold,
A witch ingrafted on a scold.
Jove in Pandora's box confin'd
A hundred ills to vex mankind;
To vex one bird, in her bandore
He hid at least a hundred more:
And soon as time that veil withdrew,
The plagues o'er all the parish flew:
Her stock of borrow'd tears grew dry,
And native tempests arm'd her eye;
Black clouds around her forehead hung,
And thunder rattled on her tongue.
We, young or old, or cock or hen,
All liv'd in Æolus's den;
The nearer her the more accurst,
Ill far'd her friends, her husband worst;
But Jove amidst his anger spares,
Remarks our faults, but hears our pray'rs.
In short she died. 'Why, then she's dead,'
Quoth I, 'and once again I'll wed.'
Would Heaven this mourning year were pass'd,
One may have better luck at last.
Matters at worst are sure to mend,
The devil's wife was but a fiend.

T. Thy tale has rais'd a Turtle's spleen;
Uxorious inmate! bird obscene!
Dar'st thou defile these sacred groves,
These silent seats of faithful loves?
Begone; with flagging wings sit down
On some old penthouse near the Town;
In brewers' stables peck thy grain,
Then wash it down with puddled rain,

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And hear thy dirty offspring squall
From bottles on a suburb-wall.
Where thou hast been, return again,
Vile bird! thou hast convers'd with men;
Notions like these from men are given,
Those vilest creatures under heaven.
  To cities and to courts repair,
Flattery and falsehood flourish there;
There all thy wretched arts employ,
Where riches triumph over joy,
Where passions do with interest barter,
And Hymen holds by Mammon's charter;
Where truth by point of law is parry'd,
And knaves and prudes are six times marry'd.

APPLICATION.

O dearest daughter* of two dearest friends!
To thee my Muse this little Tale commends:
Loving and lov'd, regard thy future mate,
Long love his person, though deplore his fate;
Seem young when old in thy dear husband's arms,
For constant virtue has immortal charms;
And when I lie low sepulchred in earth,
And the glad year returns thy day of birth,
Vouchsafe to say, 'Ere I could write or spell,
The Bard, who from my cradle wish'd me well,
Told me I should the prating Sparrow blame,
And bad me imitate the Turtle's flame.'

* Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, afterwards Duchess of Portland.

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*THE LADLE.**

The Sceptics think 'twas long ago
Since gods came down *incognito*,
To see who were their friends or foes,
And how our actions fell or rose;
That since they gave things their beginning,
And set this whirligig a-spinning,
Supine they in their heaven remain,
Exempt from passion and from pain,
And frankly leave us human elves
To cut and shuffle for ourselves;
To stand or walk, to rise or tumble,
As matter and as motion jumble.
  The poets now, and painters, hold
This thesis both absurd and bold,
And your good-natur'd gods, they say,
Descend some twice or thrice a-day,
Else all these things we toil so hard in,
Would not avail one single farthing;
For when the hero we rehearse,
To grace his actions and our verse,
'Tis not by dint of human thought
That to his Latium he is brought;
Iris descends by Fate's commands,
To guide his steps through foreign lands,
And Amphitritè clears his way
From rocks and quicksands in the sea.

* See Gayton's festivous-notes on Don Quixotte, whence this story is supposed to be taken.

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And if you see him in a sketch,
(Though drawn by Paulo or Carache)
He shows not half his force and strength,
Strutting in armour and at length;
That he may make his proper figure,
The piece must yet be four yards bigger:
The nymphs conduct him to the field,
One holds his sword, and one his shield;
Mars, standing by, asserts his quarrel,
And Fame flies after with a laurel.

These points, I say, of speculation,
(As 'twere to save or sink the nation)
Men, idly learned, will dispute,
Assert, object, confirm, refute;
Each mighty angry, mighty right,
With equal arms sustains the fight,
Till now no umpire can agree them,
So both draw off, and sing *Te Deum*.

Is it in equilibrio
If deities descend or no?
Then let the' affirmative prevail,
As requisite to form my Tale;
For by all parties 'tis confess'd
That those opinions are the best,
Which in their nature most conduce
To present ends and private use.

Two gods came, therefore, from above,
One Mercury, the other Jove;
The humour was, it seems, to know,
If all the favours they bestow,
Could from own perverseness ease us,
And if our wish enjoy'd would please us.
Discoursing largely on this theme,
O'er hills and dales their godships came,

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Till well-nigh tir'd at almost night,
They thought it proper to alight.
  Note here, that it as true as odd is,
That in disguise a god or goddess
Exerts no supernatural powers,
But acts on maxims much like ours:
They spied, at last, a country farm,
Where all was snug, and clean, and warm;
For woods before, and hills behind,
Secur'd it both from rain and wind:
Large oxen in the field were lowing,
Good grain was sow'd, good fruit was growing;
Of last year's corn in barns great store;
Fat turkeys gobbling at the door;
And Wealth, in short, with Peace consented,
That people here should live contented;
But did they in effect do so?
Have patience, friend, and thou shalt know.
  The honest farmer and his wife,
To years declin'd from prime of life,
Had struggled with the marriage noose,
As almost every couple does:
Sometimes 'My plague!' sometimes 'My darling?'
Kissing to-day, to-morrow snarling;
Jointly submitting to endure
That evil which admits no cure.
  Our gods the outward gate unbarr'd;
Our farmer met them in the yard;
Thought they were folks that lost their way,
And ask'd them civilly to stay;
Told them, for supper, or for bed,
They might go on and be worse sped.—
  So said, so done; the gods consent;
All three into the parlour went:

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They compliment, they sit, they chat,
Fight o'er the wars, reform the state;
A thousand knotty points they clear,
Till supper and my wife appear.
  Jove made his leg, and kiss'd the dame;
Obsequious Hermes did the same.
Jove kiss'd the farmer's wife, you say!
He did—but in an honest way:
Oh! not with half that warmth and life
With which he kiss'd Amphitryon's wife.—
  Well, then, things handsomely were serv'd;
My mistress for the strangers carv'd.
How strong the beer, how good the meat,
How loud they laugh'd, how much they eat,
In epic sumptuous would appear,
Yet shall be pass'd in silence here;
For I should grieve to have it said
That, by a fine description led,
I made my episode too long,
Or tir'd my friend, to grace my song.
  The grace-cup serv'd, the cloth away,
Jove thought it time to show his play:
'Landlord and landlady,' he cried,
'Folly and jesting laid aside,
That ye thus hospitably live,
And strangers with good cheer receive,
Is mighty grateful to your betters,
And makes e'en gods themselves your debtors.
To give this thesis plainer proof,
You have to-night beneath your roof
A pair of gods: (nay, never wonder)
This youth can fly, and I can thunder.
I'm Jupiter, and he Mercurius,
My page, my son, indeed, but spurious.

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Form then three wishes, you and Madam,
And, sure as you already had them,
The things desir'd, in half an hour
Shall all be here, and in your pow'r.'
'Thank ye, great gods,' the woman says;
'Oh! may your altars ever blaze!
A Ladle for our silver dish
Is what I want, is what I wish.'—
'A Ladle!' cries the man, 'a Ladle!
'Odzooks, Corisca, you have pray'd ill!
What should be great you turn to farce,
I wish the Ladle in your a—.'
With equal grief and shame my Muse
The sequel of the Tale pursues:
The Ladle fell into the room,
And stuck in old Corisca's bum.
Our couple weep two wishes past,
And kindly join to form the last;
To ease the woman's awkward pain,
And get the Ladle out again.

MORAL.

This commoner has worth and parts,
Is prais'd for arms, or lov'd for arts;
His head aches for a coronet,
And who is bless'd that is not great?
Some sense, and more estate, kind Heav'n
To this well-lotted peer has given:
What then? he must have rule and sway,
And all is wrong till he's in play.
The miser must make up his plum,
And dares not touch the hoarded sum;
The sickly dotard wants a wife,
To draw off his last dregs of life.

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Against our peace we arm our will;
Amidst our plenty something still
For horses, houses, pictures, planting,
To thee, to me, to him, is wanting:
That cruel something unpossess'd,
Corrodes and leavens all the rest:
That something, if we could obtain,
Would soon create a future pain;
And to the coffin, from the cradle,
'Tis all a wish and all a Ladle.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

Once on a time, in sunshine weather,
Falsehood and Truth walk'd out together,
The neighbouring woods and lawns to view,
As opposites will sometimes do:
Through many a blooming mead they past,
And at a brook arriv'd at last:
The purling stream, the margin green,
With flowers bedeck'd, a vernal scene,
Invited each itinerant maid
To rest a while beneath the shade;
Under a spreading beach they sat,
And pass'd the time with female chat;
Whilst each her character maintain'd,
One spoke her thoughts, the other feign'd.
At length, quoth Falsehood, 'Sister Truth,
(For so she call'd her from her youth)
What if, to shun yon sultry beam,
We bathe in this delightful stream,

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The bottom smooth, the water clear,
And there's no prying shepherd near?'—
'With all my heart,' the nymph replied,
And threw her snowy robes aside,
Stript herself naked to the skin,
And with a spring leap'd headlong in.
Falsehood more leisurely undress'd,
And laying by her tawdry vest,
Trick'd herself out in Truth's array,
And cross the meadows tript away.

From this curst hour, the fraudful dame
Of sacred Truth usurps the name,
And with a vile perfidious mind,
Roams far and near, to cheat mankind;
False sighs suborns, and artful tears,
And starts with vain, pretended fears;
In visits still appears most wise,
And rolls at church her saint-like eyes;
Talks very much, plays idle tricks,
While rising stock* her conscience pricks;
When being, poor thing, extremely gravell'd,
She secrets ope'd, and all unravell'd.
But on she will, and secrets tell
Of John and Joan, Ned and Nell,
Reviling every one she knows,
As fancy leads, beneath the rose.
Her tongue so voluble and kind,
It always runs before her mind;
As times do serve she slily pleads,
And copious tears still show her needs,
With promises as thick as weeds:—
Speaks *pro* and *con*, is wondrous civil,
To day a saint, to-morrow devil.

* Alluding to the South Sea bubble in 1720.

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Poor Truth she stript, as has been said,
And naked left the lovely maid,
Who, scorning from her cause to wince,
Has gone stark-naked ever since,
And ever naked will appear,
Belov'd by all who Truth revere.

THE MICE.

TO MR. ADRIAN DRIFT.*

Two mice, dear boy, of genteel fashion,
And, what is more, good education,
Frolic and gay, in infant years
Equally shar'd their parents' cares.
The sire of these two babes (poor creature!)
Paid his last debt to human nature;
A wealthy widow left behind
Four babes; three male, one female kind.
The sire being under ground, and buried,
'Twas thought his spouse would soon have married;
Matches propos'd, and numerous suitors,
Most tender husbands, careful tutors,
She modestly refus'd, and show'd
She'd be a mother to her brood.
Mother, dear mother, that endearing thought
Has thousand and ten thousand fancies brought:
Tell me, oh! tell me (thou art now above)
How to describe thy true maternal love,

* This gentleman had been Prior's secretary, and was left his joint executor.

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Thy early pangs, thy growing anxious cares,
Thy flattering hopes, thy fervent pious pray'rs,
Thy doleful days, and melancholy nights,
Cloister'd from common joys and just delights:
How didst thou constantly in private mourn,
And wash with daily tears thy spouse's urn!
How it employ'd your thoughts and lucid time,
That your young offspring might to honour climb:
How your first care, by numerous griefs oppress'd,
Under the burden sunk, and went to rest;
How your dear darling, by consumption's waste,
Breath'd her last piety into your breast;
How you, alas! tir'd with your pilgrimage,
Bow'd down your head, and died in good old age.
Though not inspir'd, oh! may I never be
Forgetful of my pedigree or thee:
Ungrateful howsoe'er, mayn't I forget
To pay this small, yet tributary debt;
And when we meet at God's tribunal throne,
Own me, I pray thee, for a pious son!
But why all this? Is this your fable?
Believe me, Matt, it seems a bauble;
If you will let me know the' intent on't,
Go to your Mice, and make an end on't.
Well then, dear Brother—
As sure as Hudi's* sword could swaddle,
Two Mice were brought up in one cradle;
Well-bred, I think, of equal port,
One for the gown, one for the court.
They parted, (did they so, an't please you?)
Yes, that they did (dear sir) to ease you;
One went to Holland, where they huff folk,
T' other to vent his wares in Suffolk.

* The sword of Hudibras.

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(That Mice have travell'd in old times,
Horace and Prior tell in rhymes,
Those two great wonders of their ages,
Superior far to all the sages.)
Many days past, and many a night,
Ere they could gain each other's sight;
At last in weather cold nor sultry,
They met at the Three Cranes in Poultry.
After much buss, and great grimace,
(Usual you know in such a case)
Much chat arose what had been done,
What might before next summer's sun;
Much said of France, of Suffolk's goodness,
The gentry's loyalty, mob's rudeness:
That ended, o'er a charming bottle
They enter'd on this tittle-tattle.
Quoth Suffolk, 'By pre-eminence
In years, though (God knows) not in sense,
All's gone, dear Brother, only we
Remain to raise posterity;
Marry you, Brother; I'll go down,
Sell nouns and verbs, and lie alone.
May you ne'er meet with feuds or babble,
May olive-branches crown your table.
Somewhat I'll save, and, for this end,
To prove a brother and a friend,
What I propose is just, I swear it,
Or may I perish, by this claret!'
'The dice are thrown, choose this or that,
('Tis all alike to honest Matt)
I'll take then the contrary part,
And propagate with all my heart.'
After some thought, some Portuguese,*
Some wine, the younger thus replies:

* Snuff so called.

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'Fair are your words, as fair your carriage,
Let me be free, drudge you in marriage;
Get me a boy call'd Adrian;
Trust me I'll do for't what I can.'
Home went, well pleas'd, the Suffolk Tony,
Heart free from care, as purse from money;
He got a lusty squalling boy;
(Doubtless the dad's and mammy's joy;)
In short, to make things square and even,
Adrian he nam'd was, by Dick Stephen.
Matt's debt thus paid; he now enlarges,
And sends you in a bill of charges;
A cradle, Brother, and a basket,
(Granted as soon as e'er I ask'd it,)
A coat not of the smallest scantling,
Frocks, stockings, shoes, to grace the bantling;
These, too, were sent, (or I'm no drubber,)
Nay, add to these the fine gum-rubber;*
Yet these won't do, send t' other coat,
For faith the first's not worth a groat;
Dismally shrunk, as herrings shotten,
Supposed originally rotten.
Pray let the next be each way longer,
Of stuff more durable and stronger;
Send it next week, if you are able;
By this time, sir, you know the fable.
From this, and letters of the same make,
You'll find what 'tis to have a namesake.
Cold and hard times, sir, here, (believe it,)
I've lost my curate too, and grieve it;
At Easter, for what I can see,
(A time of ease and vacancy,)

* Commonly called a coral.

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If things but alter, and not undone,
I'll kiss your hands and visit London.
Molly sends greeting; so do I, sir:
Send a good coat, that's all: good b'ye, sir.
Your's entirely,
MATTHEW.

Feb. 16, 1708-9.

TO

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN IN LOVE.

'From public noise and factious strife,
From all the busy ills of life,
Take me, my Celia, to thy breast,
And lull my wearied soul to rest:
For ever in this humble cell,
Let thee and I, my fair one, dwell;
None enter else, but Love—and he
Shall bar the door, and keep the key.
'To painted roofs and shining spires,
(Uneasy seats of high desires,)
Let the unthinking many crowd,
That dare be covetous and proud
In golden bondage let them wait,
And barter happiness for state:
But, oh! my Celia, when thy swain
Desires to see a court again,
May Heav'n around this destin'd head
The choicest of its curses shed:
To sum up all the rage of fate,
In the two things I dread and hate,
May'st thou be false, and I be great.'

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Thus, on his Celia's panting breast
Fond Celadon his soul express'd;
While with delight the lovely maid
Receiv'd the vows, she thus repaid:
'Hope of my age, joy of my youth,
Bless'd miracle of love and truth;
All that could e'er be counted mine,
My love and life, long since are thine:
A real joy I never knew,
Till I believ'd thy passion true;
A real grief I ne'er can find,
Till thou prov'st perjur'd or unkind.
Content, and poverty, and care,
All we abhor, and all we fear,
Bless'd with thy presence I can bear.
Through waters and through flames I'll go,
Sufferer and solace of thy woe:
Trace me some yet unheard-of way,
That I thy ardour may repay,
And make my constant passion known
By more than woman yet has done.
'Had I wish that did not bear
The stamp and image of my dear,
I'd pierce my heart through every vein,
And die to let it out again.
No; Venus shall my witness be,
(If Venus ever lov'd like me,)
That for one hour I would not quit
My shepherd's arms and this retreat,
To be the Persian monarch's bride,
Partner of all his power and pride;
Or rule in regal state above,
Mother of gods and wife of Jove.'

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O happy these of human race!
But soon, alas! our pleasures pass.
He thank'd her on his bended knee,
Then drank a quart of milk and tea,
And leaving her ador'd embrace,
Hasten'd to court to beg a place;
While she, his absence to bemoan,
The very moment he was gone,
Call'd Thyrsis from beneath the bed,
Where all this time he had been hid.

MORAL.

While men have these ambitious fancies,
And wanton wenches read romances,
Our sex will—'What? out with it;'—*Lie*,
And their's in equal strains reply.
The moral of the tale I sing
(A posey for the wedding ring)
In this short verse will be confin'd;
Love is a jest, and vows are wind.

THE CONVERSATION.

It always has been thought discreet
To know the company you meet;
And sure there may be secret danger
In talking much before a stranger.
'Agreed: what then?' Then drink your ale;
I'll pledge you, and repeat my Tale.

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No matter where the scene is fix'd,
The persons were but oddly mix'd;
When sober Damon thus began,
(And Damon is a clever man,)
'I now grow old, but still from youth
Have held for modesty and truth:
The men who by these sea-marks steer,
In life's great voyage never err:
Upon this point I dare defy
The world; I pause for a reply.'
'Sir, either is a good assistant,
(Said one, who sat a little distant;
Truth decks our speeches and our books,
And modesty adorns our looks:
But farther progress we must take;
Not only born to look and speak,
The man must act. The Stagirite
Says thus, and says extremely right:
Strict justice is the sovereign guide
That o'er our actions should preside;
This queen of virtues is confess'd
To regulate and bind the rest;
Thrice happy if you can but find
Her equal balance poise your mind;
All different graces soon will enter,
Like lines concurrent to their centre.'
'Twas thus, in short, these two went on,
With yea and nay, and *pro* and *con*,
Through many points divinely dark,
And Waterland assaulting Clarke,
Till, in theology half lost,
Damon took up the Evening Post,
Confounded Spain, compos'd the North,
And deep in politics held forth.

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'Methinks we're in the like condition,
As at the Treaty of Partition:
That stroke, for all King William's care,
Begat another tedious war.
Mathew, who knew the whole intrigue,
Ne'er much approv'd that mystic league:
In the vile Utrecht Treaty, too,
Poor man! he found enough to do.
Sometimes to me he did apply,
But downright Dunstable was I,
And told him where they were mistaken,
And counsell'd him to save his bacon:
But (pass his politics and prose)
I never herded with his foes;
Nay, in his verses, as a friend,
I still found something to commend:
Sir, I excus'd his Nut-brown Maid,
Whate'er severer critics said;
Too far, I own, the girl was tried;
The women all were on my side.
For Alma I return'd him thanks;
I lik'd her, with her little pranks:
Indeed poor Solomon, in rhyme,
Was much too grave to be sublime.'
Pindar and Damon scorn transition,
So on he ran a new division;
Till out of breath he turn'd to spit;
(Chance often helps us more than wit;)
T' other that lucky moment took,
Just nick'd the time, broke in, and spoke:
'Of all the gifts the gods afford,
(If we may take old Tully's word,)
The greatest is a friend; whose love
Knows how to praise, and when reprove:

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From such a treasure never part,
But hang the jewel on your heart:
And pray, sir, (it delights me) tell,
You know this author mighty well'—
'Know him! d'ye question it? Odds fish!
Sir, does a beggar know his dish?
I lov'd him, as I told you, I
Advis'd him'—Here a stander-by
Twitch'd Damon gently by the cloke,
And thus, unwilling, silence broke:
'Damon, 'tis time we should retire,
The man you talk with, is Matt Prior.'

Patron through life, and from thy birth my friend,
Dorset! to thee this Fable let me send;
With Damon's lightness weigh thy solid worth;
The foil is known to set the diamond forth:
Let the feign'd Tale this real moral give,
How many Damons, how few Dorsets, live.

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P. PURGANTI AND HIS WIFE.

AN HONEST BUT A SIMPLE PAIR.

Est enim quiddam, idque intelligitur in omni virtute, quod decent: quod cogitatione magis a virtute potest quam re separari.
Cic. de Off. lib. I.

BEYOND the fix'd and settled rules
Of vice and virtue in the schools,
Beyond the letter of the law,
Which keeps our men and maids in awe,
The better sort should set before them
A grace, a manner, a decorum;
Something that gives their acts a light,
Makes them not only just but bright,
And sets them in that open fame
Which witty Malice cannot blame.
  For 'tis in life as 'tis in painting,
Much may be right, yet much be wanting;
From lines drawn true our eye may trace,
A foot, a knee, a hand, a face;
May justly own the picture wrought
Exact to rule, exempt from fault;
Yet if the colouring be not there,
The Titian stroke, the Guido air,
To nicest judgment show the piece,
At best 'twill only not displease;
It would not gain on Jersey's eye;
Bradford would frown, and set it by.

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Thus in the picture of our mind
The action may be well design'd,
Guided by law, and bound by duty,
Yet want this *je ne sçai quoi* of beauty:
And though its error may be such
As Knags and Burgess* cannot hit;
It yet may feel the nicer touch
Of Wycherly's or Congreve's wit.
'What is this talk?' replies a friend,
'And where will this dry moral end?
The truth of what you here lay down
By some example should be shown.'—
'With all my heart—for once; read on.'
An honest, but a simple pair,
(And twenty other I forbear)
May serve to make this thesis clear.
A doctor of great skill and fame,
Paulo Purganti was his name,
Had a good, comely, virtuous wife,
No woman led a better life;
She to intrigues was ev'n hard-hearted;
She chuckled when a bawd was carted;
And thought the nation ne'er would thrive,
Till all the whores were burnt alive.
On married men that dar'd be bad,
She thought no mercy should be had;
They should be hang'd, or starv'd, or flay'd,
Or serv'd like Romish priests in Swede.—
In short, all lewdness she defied;
And stiff was her parochial pride.
Yet in an honest way the dame
Was a great lover of that same;

* Knags was lecturer of St. Giles in the Fields; Burgess was a dissenter.

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And could from Scripture take her cue,
That husbands should give wives their due.
  Her prudence did so justly steer
Between the gay and the severe,
That if in some regards she chose
To curb poor Paulo in too close,
In others she relax'd again,
And govern'd with a looser rein.
  Thus, though she strictly did confine
The Doctor from excess of wine,
With oysters, eggs, and vermicelli,
She let him almost burst his belly:
Thus drying coffee was denied,
But chocolate that loss supplied;
And for tobacco (who could bear it?)
Filthy concomitant of claret,
(Blest revolution!) one might see
Eringo roots and Bohea tea.
  She often set the Doctor's band,
And strok'd his beard, and squeez'd his hand;
Kindly complain'd, that afternoon
He went to pore on books too soon;
She held it wholesomer, by much,
To rest a little, on the couch.—
About his waist in bed a-nights
She clung so close—for fear of sprites.
  The Doctor understood the call,
But had not always wherewithal.
  The lion's skin, too short, you know,
(As Plutarch's morals finely show)
Was lengthen'd by the fox's tail,
And art supplies where strength may fail.
  Unwilling, then, in arms to meet
The enemy he could not beat;

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He strove to lengthen the campaign,
And save his forces by chicane.
Fabius, the Roman chief, who thus
By fair retreat grew Maximus,
Shows us, that all the warrior can do
With force inferior, is *cunctando*.
One day, then, as the foe drew near,
With love, and joy, and life, and dear;
Our Don, who knew this tittle-tattle
Did, sure as trumpet, call to battle;
Thought it extremely *à propos*,
To ward against the coming blow:
To ward; but how? Aye, there's the question,
Fierce the assault, unarm'd the bastion.
The Doctor feign'd a strange surprise;
He felt her pulse, he view'd her eyes:
That beat too fast, these roll'd too quick;
She was, he said, or would be sick:
He judg'd it absolutely good
That she should purge and cleanse her blood.
Spaw waters for that end were got:
If they past easily or not
What matters it? the lady's fever
Continued violent as ever.
For a distemper of this kind,
(Blackmore and Hans* are of my mind)
If once it youthful blood infects,
And chiefly of the female sex,
Is scarce remov'd by pill or potion,
Whate'er might be our Doctor's notion.
One luckless night, then, as in bed
The Doctor and the dame were laid,

* Sir Richard Blackmore, and Sir Edward Hans, physicians.

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Again this cruel fever came,
High pulse, short breath, and blood in flame.
What measures shall poor Paulo keep
  With madam in this piteous taking?
She, like Macbeth, has murder'd sleep,
  And won't allow him rest, though waking.
Sad state of matters! when we dare
Nor ask for peace, nor offer war;
Nor Livy nor Comines have shown
What in this juncture may be done.
Grotius might own that Paulo's case is
Harder than any, which he places
Amongst his Belli and his Pacis.
  He strove, alas! but strove in vain,
By dint of logic, to maintain
That all the sex was born to grieve,
Down to her ladyship from Eve.
He rang'd his tropes, and preach'd up patience;
Back'd his opinion with quotations,
Divines and moralists, and run ye on
Quite through from Seneca to Bunyan.*
As much in vain he bid her try
To fold her arms, to close her eye,
Telling her rest would do her good,
If any thing in nature cou'd;
So held the Greeks, quite down from Galen,
Masters and princes of the calling:
So all our modern friends maintain
(Though no great Greeks) in Warwick Lane.
  Reduce, my Muse, the wandering song
A Tale should never be too long.
  The more he talk'd, the more she burn'd,
And sigh'd, and toss'd, and groan'd, and turn'd:

* Author of the Pilgrim's Progress.

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At last, 'I wish,' said she, 'my dear'—
(And whisper'd something in his ear.)
'You wish! wish on,' the Doctor cries,
'Lord! when will womankind be wise?
What, in your waters, are you mad?
Why, poison is not half so bad.
I'll do it—but, I give you warning,
You'll die before to-morrow morning.'—
''Tis kind, my dear, what you advise,
(The lady with a sigh replies)
But life, you know, at best is pain,
And death is what we should disdain:
So do it, therefore, and adieu,
For I will die for love of you.—
Let wanton wives by death be scar'd;
But, to my comfort, I'm prepar'd.'

PROTEGENES AND APELLES.

When poets wrote and painters drew,
As Nature pointed out the view;
Ere Gothic forms were known in Greece,
To spoil the well-proportion'd piece;
And in our verse ere Monkish rhymes
Had jangled their fantastic chimes;
Ere on the flowery lands of Rhodes
Those knights had fix'd their dull abodes,
Who knew not much to paint or write,
Nor car'd to pray, nor dar'd to fight;
Protogenes, historians note,
Liv'd there, a burgess, scot and lot;

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And, as old Pliny's writings show,
Apelles did the same at Co.
Agreed these points of time and place,
Proceed we in the present case.
  Piqued by Protogenes's fame,
From Co to Rhodes Apelles came,
To see a rival and a friend,
Prepar'd to censure, or commend;
Here to absolve, and there object,
As art with candour might direct.
He sails, he lands, he comes, he rings;
His servants follow with the things:
Appears the governante o' th' house,
For such in Greece were much in use;
If young or handsome, yea or no,
Concerns not me or thee to know.
'Does 'Squire Protogenes live here?'—
'Yes, sir, (says she, with gracious air,
And curt'sy low) but just call'd out
By lords peculiarly devout,
Who came on purpose, sir, to borrow
Our Venus, for the feast to-morrow,
To grace the church: 'tis Venus' day:
I hope, sir, you intend to stay
To see our Venus: 'tis the piece
The most renown'd throughout all Greece;
So like the' original, they say;
But I have no great skill that way.
But, sir, at six, ('tis now past three)
Dromo must make my master's tea:
At six, sir, if you please to come,
You'll find my master, sir, at home.'
  Tea, says a critic, big with laughter,
Was found some twenty ages after:

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Authors, before they write, should read.
'Tis very true; but we'll proceed.
'And, sir, at present would you please
To leave your name'—'Fair maiden, yes:
Reach me that board.' No sooner spoke
But done. With one judicious stroke
On the plain ground Apelles drew
A circle regularly true.
'And will you please, Sweetheart,' said he,
'To shew your master this from me?
By it he presently will know
How painters write their names at Co.'
He gave the pannel to the maid:
Smiling, and curt'sying, 'Sir,' she said,
'I shall not fail to tell my master:
And, sir, for fear of all disaster,
I'll keep it my own self: Safe bind,
Says the old proverb, and safe find.
So, sir, as sure as key or lock—
Your servant, sir—at six a clock.'
Again at six Apelles came,
Found the same prating civil dame:
'Sir, that my master has been here,
Will by the board itself appear:
If from the perfect line he found,
He has presum'd to swell the round,
Or colours on the draught to lay,
'Tis thus (he ordered me to say)
Thus write the painters of this isle;
Let those of Co remark the style.'
She said: and to his hand restor'd
The rival pledge, the missive board.
Upon the happy line were laid
Such obvious light and easy shade,

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That Paris' apple stood confess'd,
Or Leda's egg, or Chloe's breast.
  Apelles view'd the finish'd piece;
'And live,' said he, 'the arts of Greece!
Howe'er Protogenes and I
May in our rival talents vie;
Howe'er our works may have express'd
Who truest drew, or colour'd best;
When he beheld my flowing line,
He found, at least, I could design;
And from his artful round, I grant,
That he with perfect skill can paint.'
  The dullest genius cannot fail
To find the moral of my Tale;
That the distinguish'd part of men,
With compass, pencil, sword, or pen,
Should in life's visit leave their name
In characters, which may proclaim
That they with ardour strove to raise
At once their art's and country's praise;
And in their working took great care
That all was full, and round, and fair.

HANS CARVEL.

Hans Carvel, impotent and old,
Married a lass of London mould:
Handsome enough; extremely gay;
Lov'd music, company, and play:
High flights she had, and wit at will,
And so her tongue lay seldom still;

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For in all visits who but she
To argue or to repartee?
  She made it plain that human passion
Was order'd by predestination;
That if weak women went astray,
Their stars were more in fault than they.
Whole tragedies she had by heart;
Enter'd into Roxana's part;
To triumph in her rival's blood,
The action certainly was good.
How like a vine young Ammon curl'd!
Oh, that dear conqueror of the world!
She pitied Betterton in age,
That ridicul'd the godlike rage.
  She, first of all the Town, was told
Where newest India things were sold;
So in a morning, without bodice,
Slipt sometimes out to Mrs. Thody's
To cheapen tea, to buy a screen;
What else could so much virtue mean?
For, to prevent the least reproach,
Betty went with her in the coach.
  But when no very great affair
Excited her peculiar care,
She without fail was wak'd at ten,
Drank chocolate, then slept again:
At twelve she rose; with much ado
Her clothes were huddled on by two:
Then, 'does my lady dine at home?'
'Yes, sure;—but is the Colonel come?'
Next, how to spend the afternoon,
And not come home again too soon;
The 'Change, the city, or the play,
As each was proper for the day;

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A turn in summer to Hyde-Park,
When it grew tolerably dark.
Wife's pleasure causes husband's pain;
Strange fancies come in Hans's brain:
He thought of what he did not name,
And would reform, but durst not blame.
At first he, therefore, preach'd his wife
The comforts of a pious life;
Told her how transient beauty was;
That all must die, and flesh was grass:
He bought her sermons, psalms, and graces,
And doubled down the useful places:
But still the weight of worldly care
Allow'd her little time for pray'r;
And Cleopatra* was read o'er,
While Scot,† and Wake,‡ and twenty more,
That teach one to deny one's self,
Stood unmolested on the shelf.
An untouch'd Bible grac'd her toilet.
No fear that thumb of her's should spoil it.
In short, the trade was still the same;
The Dame went out, the Colonel came.
'What's to be done?' poor Carvel cried;
'Another battery must be tried:
What if to spells I had recourse?
'Tis but to hinder something worse.
The end must justify the means;
He only sins who ill intends:
Since, therefore, 'tis to combat evil,
'Tis lawful to employ the devil.'

* A novel, much read by the ladies at that time.
† Dr. John Scot, author of the Christian Life.
‡ Dr. William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury.

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Forthwith the devil did appear,
(For name him, and he's always near)
Not in the shape in which he plies
At miss's elbow when she lies,
Or stands before the nursery doors,
To take the naughty boy that roars;
But, without saucer eye or claw,
Like a grave barrister at law.
'Hans Carvel, lay aside your grief,'
The devil says; 'I bring relief.'
'Relief!' says Hans;' 'pray let me crave
Your name, sir?'—'Satan.'—'Sir, your slave.
I did not look upon your feet;
You'll pardon me—Aye, now I see't.
And pray, sir, when came you from hell?
Our friends there, did you leave them well?
'All well; but, pr'ythee, honest Hans,'
Says Satan, 'leave your complaisance:
The truth is this; I cannot stay
Flaring in sunshine all the day,
For, *entre nous*, we hellish sprites
Love more the fresco of the nights,
And oft'ner our receipts convey
In dreams, than any other way.
I tell you, therefore, as a friend,
Ere morning dawns your fears shall end:
Go then, this evening, Master Carvel,
Lay down your fowls, and broach your barrel;
Let friends and wine dissolve your care,
Whilst I the great receipt prepare—
To-night I'll bring it, by my faith;
Believe for once what Satan saith.'
Away went Hans; glad not a little;
Obey'd the devil to a tittle:

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Invited friends some half a dozen,
The Col'nel and my Lady's cousin.
The meat was serv'd, the bowls were crown'd,
Catches were sung, and healths went round;
Barbadoes' waters for the close;
Till Hans had fairly got his dose:
The Col'nel toasted, to the best;
The Dame mov'd off to be undress'd:
The chimes went twelve; the guests withdrew;
But when, or how, Hans hardly knew:
Some modern anecdotes aver
He nodded in his elbow-chair;
From thence was carried off to bed;
John held his heels, and Nan his head;
My Lady was disturb'd; new sorrow!
Which Hans must answer for to-morrow.
  In bed then view this happy pair,
And think how Hymen triumph'd there:
Hans, fast asleep, as soon as laid,
The duty of the night unpaid;
The waking Dame, with thoughts oppress'd,
That made her hate both him and rest:
By such a husband, such a wife.
'Twas Acme's and Septimeus' life:
The lady sigh'd; the lover snor'd;
The punctual devil kept his word;
Appear'd to honest Hans again,
But not at all by Madam seen;
And giving him a magic ring,
Fit for the finger of a king,
'Dear Hans,' said he, 'this jewel take,
And wear it long for Satan's sake;
'Twill do your business to a hair;
For long as you this ring shall wear,

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As sure as I look over Lincoln,
That ne'er shall happen which you think on.'
  Hans took the ring with joy extreme,
(All this was only in a dream)
And thrusting it beyond his joint,
' 'Tis done,' he cry'd: ' I've gain'd my point.'—
' What point,' said she, ' you ugly beast?
You neither give me joy nor rest.'
' 'Tis done.'—' What's done, you drunken bear?
You've thrust your finger —— knows where!'

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*EPILOGUE TO PHÆDRA.**

SPOKEN BY MRS. OLDFIELD, WHO ACTED ISMENA.

LADIES, to-night your pity I implore
For one who never troubled you before;
An Oxford-man, extremely read in Greek,
Who from Euripides makes Phædra speak,
And comes to Town to let us Moderns know
How women lov'd two thousand years ago.
  If that be all, said I, e'en burn your play;
I'gad! we know all that as well as they:
Show us the youthful, handsome charioteer,
Firm in his seat, and running his career,
Our souls will kindle with as generous flames
As e'er inspir'd the ancient Grecian dames;
Every Ismena would resign her breast,
And every dear Hippolytus be bless'd.
  But as it is, six flouncing Flanders mares
Are e'en as good as any two of theirs;
And if Hippolytus can but contrive
To buy the gilded chariot, John can drive.
  Now of the bustle you have seen to-day,
And Phædra's morals in this scholar's play,
Something at least in justice should be said;
But this Hippolytus so fills one's head—
Well! Phædra liv'd as chastely as she could,
For she was Father Jove's own flesh and blood.
Her awkward love, indeed, was oddly fated;
She and her Poly were too near related;

* Phædra and Hippolytus, a tragedy, written by Mr. Edmund Smith.

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And yet that scruple had been laid aside,
If honest Theseus had but fairly died:
But when he came, what needed he to know
But that all matters stood in *statu quo?*
There was no harm, you see; or grant there were,
She might want conduct, but he wanted care.
'Twas in a husband little less than rude,
Upon his wife's retirement to intrude—
He should have sent, a night or two before,
That he would come exact at such an hour;
Then he had turn'd all tragedy to jest,
Found every thing contribute to his rest,
The piquet-friend dismiss'd, the coast all clear,
And spouse alone, impatient for her dear.
  But if these gay reflections come too late
To keep the guilty Phædra from her fate;
If your more serious judgment must condemn
The dire effects of her unhappy flame;
Yet, ye chaste matrons, and ye tender fair,
Let love and innocence engage your care;
My spotless flames to your protection take,
And spare poor Phædra for Ismena's sake.

---

*EPILOGUE TO LUCIUS.**

SPOKEN BY MRS. HORTON.

The female Author who recites to-day,
Trusts to her sex the merit of her play.
Like Father Bays, securely she sits down:
Pit, box, and gallery, Gad! all's our own.

* Lucius, the first Christian King of Britain, a tragedy, written by Mrs. Manley.

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In ancient Greece, she says, when Sappho writ,
By their applause the critics show'd their wit;
They tun'd their voices to her lyric string,
Though they could all do something more than sing.
But one exception to this fact we find,
That booby Phaon only was unkind,
An ill-bred boatman, rough as waves and wind.
From Sappho down through all succeeding ages,
And now on French or on Italian stages,
Rough satires, sly remarks, ill-natur'd speeches,
Are always aim'd at poets that wear breeches.
Arm'd with Longinus, or with Rapin, no man
Drew a sharp pen upon a naked woman.
The blustering bully in our neighbouring streets
Scorns to attack the female that he meets;
Fearless, the petticoat contemns his frowns,
The hoop secures whatever it surrounds.
The many-colour'd gentry there above,
By turns are rul'd by Tumult and by Love,
And while their sweethearts their attention fix,
Suspend the din of their damn'd clattering sticks.
Now, sirs,—
To you our Author makes her soft request,
Who speak the kindest, and who write the best;
Your sympathetic hearts she hopes to move,
From tender friendship and endearing love.
If Petrarch's muse did Laura's wit rehearse,
And Cowley flatter'd dear Orinda's verse,
She hopes from you—Pox take her hopes and fears;
I plead her sex's claim; what matters her's?
By our full power of beauty we think fit
To damn this Salique law impos'd on wit;
We'll try the empire you so long have boasted,
And if we are not prais'd, we'll not be toasted:

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Approve what one of us presents to-night,
Or every mortal woman here shall write:
Rural, pathetic, narrative, sublime,
We'll write to you, and make you write in rhyme;
Female remarks shall take up all your time.
Your time, poor souls! we'll take your very money
Female third days shall come so thick upon ye,
As long as we have eyes, or hands, or breath,
We'll look, or write, or talk you all to death,
Unless you yield for better and for worse;
Then the she-Pegasus shall gain the course;
And the grey mare will prove the better horse.

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SONGS AND BALLADS.

THE

THIEF AND CORDELIER.

A BALLAD.

To the tune of King John and the Abbot of Canterbury.

Who has e'er been at Paris must needs know the [Greve,
The fatal retreat of the unfortunate brave,
Where honour and justice most oddly contribute
To ease heroes' pains by a halter and gibbet.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

There death breaks the shackles which force had [begun;
put on,
And the hangman completes what the judge but [more crost.
There the' Squire of the Pad and the Knight of the
Post.
Find their pains no more balk'd, and their hopes no
Derry down, &c.

Great claims there are made, and great secrets are [own;
known,
And the king, and the law, and the thief has his [ail?
But my hearers cry out, 'What a deuce dost thou
Cut off thy reflections, and give us thy tale.'
Derry down, &c.

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'Twas there then, in civil respect to harsh laws,
And for want of false witness to back a bad cause,
A Norman, though late, was oblig'd to appear,
And who to assist, but a grave Cordelier?
Derry down, &c.

The 'Squire, whose good grace was to open the scene
Seem'd not in great haste that the show should begin,
Now fitted the halter, now travers'd the cart,
And often took leave, but was loth to depart.
Derry down, &c.

'What frightens you thus, my good son? (says the priest)
You murder'd, are sorry, and have been confess'd.'
'O Father! my sorrow will scarce save my bacon,
For 'twas not that I murder'd, but that I was taken.'
Derry down, &c.

'Pugh! pr'ythee ne'er trouble thy head with such fancies;
Rely on the aid you shall have from Saint Francis;
If the money you promis'd be brought to the chest,
You have only to die; let the Church do the rest.
Derry down, &c.

'And what will folks say if they see you afraid?
It reflects upon me as I knew not my trade:
Courage, friend, for to-day is your period of sorrow,
And things will go better, believe me, to-morrow.'
Derry down, &c.

'To-morrow! (our hero replied, in a fright,)
He that's hang'd before noon, ought to think of to-night.'
'Tell your beads, (quoth the priest) and be fairly [truss'd up,
For you surely to-night shall in Paradise sup.'
Derry down, &c.

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'Alas! quoth the 'Squire, howe'er sumptuous the
treat,
Parbleu, I shall have little stomach to eat;
I should therefore esteem it great favour and grace,
Would you be so kind as to go in my place.'
Derry down, &c.

'That I would (quoth the Father) and thank you
to boot,
But our actions, you know, with our duty must suit:
The feast I propos'd to you I cannot taste,
For this night, by our Order, is mark'd for a fast.'
Derry down, &c.

Then turning about to the hangman, he said,
'Dispatch me, I pr'ythee, this troublesome blade;
For thy cord and my cord both equally tie,
And we live by the gold for which other men die.'
Derry down, &c.

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SUR LA PRISE DE NAMUR,

PAR

LES ARMES DU ROI,

L' ANNEE 1692.

PAR MONSIEUR BOILEAU DESPREAUX.

QUELLE docte et sainte yvresse
  Aujourd'hui me fait la loy ?
Chastes nymphes du Permesse,
  N'est-ce pas vous que je voy ?
Accourez, troupe sçavante :
Des sons que ma lyre enfante ;
  Ces arbres sont réjoüis :
Marquez en bien la cadence :
Et vous, vents, faites silence :
  Je vais parler de Louis.

Dans ses chansons immortelles,
  Comme un aigle audacieux,
Pindare étendant ses ailes,
  Fuit loin des vulgaires yeux,
Mais, ô ma fidele lyre,
Si, dans l'ardeur qui m' inspire,
  Tu peux suivre mes transports ;
Les chesnes des monts de Thrace
N'ont rien oüi, que n'efface
  La douceur de tes accords.

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ENGLISH BALLAD.

ON THE TAKING OF

NAMUR, BY THE KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1695*.

Dulce est desipere in loco.

Some folks are drunk, yet do not know it:
  So might not Bacchus give you law?
Was it a muse, O lofty poet,
  Or virgin of Saint Cyr, you saw?
Why all this fury? what's the matter,
  That oaks must come from Thrace to dance?
Must stupid stocks be taught to flatter?
  And is there no such wood in France?
Why must the winds all hold their tongue?
  If they a little breath should raise,
Would that have spoil'd the poet's song,
  Or puff'd away the monarch's praise?

Pindar, that eagle, mounts the skies,
  While Virtue leads the noble way;
Too like a vulture Boileau flies,
  Where sordid interest shews the prey.
When once the poet's honour ceases,
  From reason far his transports rove;
And Boileau, for eight hundred pieces,
  Makes Louis take the wall of Jove.

* Namur was taken by the French in 1692, on which occasion Boileau composed his Pindaric; it was retaken by the English in 1695, when Prior executed his most happy burlesque parody.

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Est-ce Apollon et Neptune,
  Qui sur ces rocs sourcilleux
Ont, compagnons de fortune,
  Basti ces murs orgueilleux?
De leur enceinte fameuse
La Sambre unie à la Meuse,
  Defend le fatal abord;
Et par cent bouches horribles
L' airain sur ces monts terribles
  Vomit le fer, et la mort.

Dix mille vaillans Alcides
  Les bordant de toutes parts,
D' éclairs au loin homicides
  Font petiller leurs remparts:
Et dan son sein infidele
Par tout la terre y recele
  Un feu prest à s'élancer,
Qui soudain perçant son goufre,
Ouvre un sepulchre de soufre
  A quiconque ose avancer.

Namur, devant tes murailles
  Jadis la Grece eust vingt ans,
Sans fruit veu les funerailles
  De ses plus siers combattans.
Quelle effroyable puissance
Aujourd'hui pourtant s'avance,
  Preste à foudroyer tes monts?
Quel bruit, quel feu l' environne?
C'est Jupiter en personne;
  Ou c'est le vainqueur de Mons.

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Neptune and Sol came from above,
  Shap'd like Megrigny and Vauban*;
They arm'd these rocks; then show'd old Jove
  Of Marli wood the wondrous plan.
Such walls these three wise gods agreed,
  By human force could ne'er be shaken;
But you and I in Homer read
  Of gods, as well as men, mistaken.
Sambre and Maese their waves may join,
  But ne'er can William's force restrain:
He'll pass them both who pass'd the Boyne;
  Remember this, and arm the Seine.

Full fifteen thousand lusty fellows,
  With fire and sword the fort maintain;
Each was a Hercules, you tell us,
  Yet out they march'd like common men.
Cannons above, and mines below,
  Did death and tombs for foes contrive;
Yet matters have been order'd so,
  That most of us are still alive.

If Namur be compar'd to Troy,
  Then Britain's boys excell'd the Greeks;
Their siege did ten long years employ;
  We've done our business in ten weeks.
What godhead does so fast advance
  With dreadful power, those hills to gain?
'Tis little Will, the scourge of France;
  No godhead, but the first of men.
His mortal arm exerts the power
  To keep even Mons's victor under†;
And that same Jupiter no more
  Shall fright the world with impious thunder.

* Two famous engineers.
† Mons surrendered to Louis XIV. April 10, 1691.

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N'en doute point : c'est luy-même,
  Tout brille en luy ; tout est Roy.
Dans Bruxelles Nassau blême
  Commence à trembler pour toy.
En vain il voit le Batâve,
Desormais docile esclâve,
  Rangé sous ses étendars :
En vain au Lion Belgique
Il voit l'Aigle Germanique
  Uni sous les Leopards.

Plein de la frayeur nouvelle,
  Dont ses sens sont agités,
A son secours il appelle
  Les peuples les plus vantés,
Ceux-là viennent du rivage,
Ou s'enorgueillit le Tage
  De l' or, qui roule en ses caux
Ceux-ci des champs, où la neige
Des marais de la Norvége
  Neuf mois couvre les roseaux.

Mais qui fait enfler la Sambre ?
  Sous les Jumeaux effrayés,
Des froids torrens de Decembre
  Les champs par tout sont noyés.
Cerés s' enfuit, éplorée
De voir en proye à Borée

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Our King thus trembles at Namur,
  Whilst Villeroy, who ne'er afraid is,
To Bruxelles marches on secure,
  To bomb the monks and scare the ladies.
After this glorious expedition,
  One battle makes the Marshal great;
He must perform the King's commission;
  Who knows but Orange may retreat?
Kings are allow'd to feign the gout,
  Or be prevail'd with not to fight;
And mighty Louis hop'd, no doubt,
  That William would preserve that right.

From Seine and Loire, to Rhone and Po,
  See every mother's son appear:
In such a case ne'er blame a foe,
  If he betrays some little fear.
He comes, the mighty Villeroy comes,
  Finds a small river in his way;
So waves his colours, beats his drums,
  And thinks it prudent there to stay.
The Gallic troops breathe blood and war;
  The Marshal cares not to march faster;
Poor Villeroy moves so slowly here
  We fancied all it was his master.

Will no kind flood, no friendly rain,
  Disguise the Marshal's plain disgrace;
No torrents swell the low Mehayne?
  The world will say, he durst not pass.
Why will no Hyades appear,
  Dear poet, on the banks of Sambre?
Just as they did that mighty year
  When you turn'd June into December.

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Ses guerets d'epics chargés,
Et sous les urnes fangeuses
Des Hyades oragueses
Tous ses trésors submergés

Déployez toutes vos rages,
Princes, vents, peuples, frimats;
Ramassez tous vos nuages;
Rassamblez tous vos saldats.
Malgré vous Namur en poudre
S'en va tomber sous la foudre
Qui domta Lille, Courtray,
Grand la superbe Espagnole,
Saint Omer, Bezançon, Dole,
Ypres, Maestricht, et Cambray.

Mes présages s'accomplissent;
Il commence à chanceler:
Sous les coups qui retentissent
Ses murs s'en vont s'ecrouler.
Mars en feu qui les domine,
Souffle à grand bruit leur ruine;
Et les bombes dans les airs
Allant chercher le tonnere,
Semblent tombant sur la terre,
Vouloir s'ouvrir les enfers.

Accourez, Nassau, Baviere,
De ces murs l'unique espoir;
A couvert d'une riviere
Venez: vous pouvez tout voir.

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The water-nymphs are, too, unkind
  To Villeroy; are the land-nymphs so?
And fly they all, at once combin'd
  To shame a general and a beau?

Truth, justice, sense, religion, fame,
  May join to finish William's story;
Nations set free, may bless his name,
  And France in secret own his glory;
But Ypres, Maestricht, and Cambray,
  Besançon, Ghent, Saint Omer's, Lisle,
Courtray, and Dole—Ye critics, say,
  How poor to this was Pindar's style?
With *ekes* and *alsos* tack thy strain,
  Great Bard! and sing the deathless prince,
Who lost Namur the same campaign
  He bought Dixmuyd, and plunder'd Deynse.

I'll hold ten pounds my dream is out;
  I'd tell it you but for the rattle
Of those confounded drums; no doubt
  Yon bloody rogues intend a battle.
Dear me! a hundred thousand French
  With terror fill the neighbouring field,
While William carries on the trench,
  Till both the town and castle yield.
Villeroy to Boufflers should advance,
  Says Mars, through cannons mouths' in fire;
Id est, one Mareschal of France
  Tells t' other he can come no nigher.

Regain the lines the shortest way,
  Villeroy, or to Versailles take post,
For having seen it, thou canst say
  The steps by which Namur was lost.

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Considerez ces approches:
Voyez grimper sur ces roches
  Ces athletes belliqueux;
Et dans les eaux, dans la flame,
Louis à tout donnant l'ame,
  Marcher, courir avecque eux.

Contemplez dans la tempeste,
  Qui sort de ces boulevards,
La plume qui sur sa teste
  Attire tous les regards.
A cet astre redoubtable
Toûjours un sort favorable
  S'attache dans les combats:
Et toûjours avec la gloire
Mars amenant la victoire
  Vôle, et le suit à grands pas.

Grands defenseurs de l'Espagne,
  Montrez-vous: il en est temps:
Courage; vers la Mahagne
  Voilà vos drapeaux flottans.
Jamais ses ondes craintives
N'ont veû sur leurs foibles rives
  Tant de guerriers s'amasser.
Courez donc: Qui vous retarde?
Tout l'univers vous regarde.
  N'osez-vous la traverser?

Loin de fermer le passage
  A vos nombreux bataillons,
Luxembourg a du rivage
  Reculé ses pavillons.
Quoy? leur seul aspect vous glace?
Où sont ces chefs pleins d'audace,

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The smoke and flame may vex thy sight;
Look not once back; but, as thou goest,
Quicken the squadrons in their flight,
And bid the devil take the slowest.
Think not what reason to produce,
From Louis to conceal thy fear;
He'll own the strength of thy excuse,
Tell him that William was but there.

Now let us look for Louis' feather,
That us'd to shine so like a star;
The Generals could not get together
Wanting that influence, great in war;
O Poet! thou hadst been discreeter,
Hanging the Monarch's hat so high,
If thou hadst dubb'd thy star a meteor,
That did but blaze, and rove, and die.

To animate the doubtful fight,
Namur in vain expects that ray;
In vain France hopes the sickly light
Should shine near William's fuller day.
It knows Versailles its proper station,
Nor cares for any foreign sphere:
Where you see Boileau's constellation,
Be sure no danger can be near.

The French had gather'd all their force,
And William met them in their way,
Yet off they brush'd, both foot and horse;
What has friend Boileau left to say?
When his high Muse is bent upon't,
To sing her King, that great commander,
Or on the shores of Hellespont,
Or in the vallies near Scamander,

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Jadis si prompts à marcher,
Qui devoient de la Tamise,
Et de la drâve soûmise,
Jusqu' à Paris nous chercher?

Cependant l'effroy redouble
Sour les remparts de Namur
Son gouverneur qui se trouble
S'enfuit sous san dernier mur.
Déja jusques à ses portes
Je voy monter nos cohortes,
La flame et le fer en main:
Et sur les monceaux de piques,
De corps morts, de rocs, de briques,
S'ouvrir un large chemin.

C'en est fait. Je viens d'entendre
Sur ces rochers éperdus
Battre un signal pour se rendre:
Le feu cesse. Ils sont rendus.
Dépoüillez vôtre arrogance,
Fiers ennemis de la France,
Et desormais gracieux,
Allez à Liege, à Bruxelles,
Porter les humbles nouvelles
De Namur pris à vous yeux.

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Would it not spoil his noble task,
  If any foolish Phrygian there is
Impertinent enough to ask,
  How far Namur may be from Paris?

Two stanzas more before we end,
  Of death, pikes, rocks, arms, bricks, and fire;
Leave them behind you, honest friend,
  And with your countrymen retire.
Your ode is spoilt; Namur is freed:
  For Dixmuyd something yet is due;
So good count Guiscard may proceed;*
  But, Boufflers, sir, one word with you—

'Tis done. In sight of these commanders,
  Who neither fight nor raise the siege,
The foes of France march safe through Flanders,
  Divide to Bruxelles or to Liege.
Send, Fame, this news to Trianon,
  That Boufflers may new honours gain;
He the same play by land has shown,
  As Tourville did upon the main.†
Yet is the Marshal made a peer:
  O, William! may thy arms advance,
That he may lose Dinant next year,
  And so be Constable of France.

* Count Guiscard was commander of the *town* of Namur, and Marshal Boufflers of the *castle*.

† M. de Tourville commanded the French squadron which engaged Admiral Russell off La Hogue, in 1692.

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TO A LADY,

SHE REFUSING TO CONTINUE A DISPUTE WITH ME, AND LEAVING ME IN THE ARGUMENT.

SPARE, generous Victor, spare the slave
  Who did unequal war pursue,
That more than triumph he might have,
  In being overcome by you.

In the dispute, whate'er I said
  My heart was by my tongue belied,
And in my looks you might have read
  How much I argued on your side.

You, far from danger as from fear,
  Might have sustain'd an open fight;
For seldom your opinions err;
  Your eyes are always in the right.

Why, fair-one, would you not rely
  On Reason's force with Beauty's join'd?
Could I their prevalence deny,
  I must at once be deaf and blind.

Alas! not hoping to subdue,
  I only to the fight aspir'd:
To keep the beauteous foe in view
  Was all the glory I desir'd.

But she, howe'er of victory sure,
  Contemns the wreath too long delay'd,
And, arm'd with more immediate pow'r,
  Calls cruel silence to her aid.

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Deeper to wound, she shuns the fight;
  She drops her arms to gain the field;
Secures her conquest by her flight,
  And triumphs, when she seems to yield.

So when the Parthian turn'd his steed,
  And from the hostile camp withdrew,
With cruel skill the backward reed
  He sent; and, as he fled, he slew.

DEMOCRITUS AND HERACLITUS.

Democritus, dear droll, revisit earth,
And with our follies glut thy heighten'd mirth:
Sad Heraclitus, serious wretch, return,
In louder grief our greater crimes to mourn.
Between you both, I unconcern'd stand by;
Hurt, can I laugh? and honest, need I cry?

THE FEMALE PHAETON.

Thus Kitty, beautiful and young,
  And wild as colt untam'd,
Bespoke the fair from whence she sprung,
  With little rage inflam'd:

'Inflam'd with rage at sad restraint,
  Which wise mamma ordain'd,
And sorely vex'd to play the saint,
  Whilst wit and beauty reign'd.

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'Shall I thumb holy books, confin'd
With Abigails, forsaken?
Kitty's for other things design'd,
Or I am much mistaken.

'Must Lady Jenny frisk about,
And visit with her cousins?
At balls must she make all the rout,
And bring home hearts by dozens?

'What has she better, pray, than I?
What hidden charms to boast,
That all mankind for her should die,
Whilst I am scarce a toast?

'Dearest mamma, for once let me,
Unchain'd, my fortune try:
I'll have my earl as well as she,
Or know the reason why.

'I'll soon with Jenny's pride quit score,
Make all her lovers fall:
They'll grieve I was not loos'd before:
She, I was loos'd at all.'

Fondness prevail'd, mamma gave way:
Kitty, at heart's desire,
Obtain'd the chariot for a day,
And set the world on fire.

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UPON THIS

PASSAGE IN SCALIGERANA,

Les Allemans ne ce soucient pas quel vin ils boivent pourveu que ce soit vin, ni quel Latin ils parlent pourveu que ce soit Latin.

When you with High-Dutch Heeren dine,
Expect false Latin, and stum'd wine:
They never taste who always drink;
They always talk who never think.

A PASSAGE IN THE

MORIÆ ENCOMIUM OF ERASMUS.

IMITATED.

In awful pomp and melancholy state,
See settled Reason on the judgment seat;
Around her crowd Distrust, and Doubt, and Fear,
And thoughtful Foresight, and tormenting Care;
Far from the throne the trembling Pleasures stand,
Chain'd up or exil'd by her stern command.
Wretched her subjects, gloomy sits the queen,
Till happy Chance reverts the cruel scene;
And apish Folly, with her wild resort
Of Wit and Jest, disturbs the solemn court.
  See the fantastic Minstrelsy advance
To breathe the song and animate the dance.
Bless'd the usurper! happy the surprise!
Her mimic postures catch our eager eyes;

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Her jingling bells affect our captive ear,
And in the sights we see and sounds we hear,
Against our judgment she our sense employs,
The laws of troubled Reason she destroys,
And in their place rejoices to indite
Wild schemes of mirth, and plans of loose delight.

A REASONABLE AFFLICTION.

On his death-bed poor Lubin lies,
  His spouse is in despair:
With frequent sobs and mutual cries,
  They both express their care.

'A different cause, (says Parson Sly)
  The same effect may give;
Poor Lubin fears that he shall die,
  His wife that he may live.'

ANOTHER.

Her eyebrow box one morning lost,
(The best of folks are oftnest crost)
Sad Helen thus to Jenny said,
Her careless but afflicted maid,
'Put me to bed, then, wretched Jane;
Alas! when shall I rise again?
I can behold no mortal now,
For what's an eye without a brow?'

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NELL AND JOHN.

When Nell, given o'er by the Doctor, was dying,
And John at the chimney stood decently crying;
'Tis in vain, (said the woman) to make such ado,
For to our long home we must all of us go!'

'True, Nell, (replied John) but, what yet is the worst
For us that remain, the best always go first:
Remember, dear wife, that I said so last year,
When you lost your white heifer, and I my brown mare!'

THE MODERN SAINT.

Her time with equal prudence Silvia shares,
First writes a *billet-doux*, then says her prayers;
Her mass and toilet; vespers and the play;
Thus God and Ashtaroth divide the day:
Constant she keeps her Ember-week and Lent,
At Easter calls all Israel to her tent:
Loose without bawd, and pious without zeal,
She still repeats the sins she would conceal.
Envy herself from Silvia's life must grant,
An artful woman makes a Modern Saint.

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THE REMEDY

WORSE THAN THE DISEASE.

I SENT for Ratcliffe, was so ill
  That other doctors gave me over,
He felt my pulse, prescrib'd his pill,
  And I was likely to recover.

But when the wit began to wheeze,
  And wine had warm'd the politician;
Cur'd yesterday of my disease,
  I died last night of my physician.

EPITAPH.

Stet quicunque volet potens
Aulæ culmine lubrico, &c.
Seneca.

INTER'D beneath this marble stone,
Lie sauntering Jack and Idle Joan.
While rolling threescore years and one
Did round this globe their courses run,
If human things went ill or well,
If changing empires rose or fell,
The morning past, the evening came,
And found this couple still the same.
They walk'd, and ate, good folks; what then?
Why, then they walk'd and ate again.

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They soundly slept the night away;
They did just nothing all the day:
And having buried children four,
Would not take pains to try for more.
Nor sister either had, nor brother;
They seem'd just tally'd for each other.
  Their moral and economy
Most perfectly they made agree;
Each virtue kept its proper bound,
Nor trespass'd on the other's ground.
Nor fame nor censure they regarded;
They neither punish'd nor rewarded.
He car'd not what the footmen did;
Her maids she neither prais'd nor chid;
So every servant took his course,
And, bad at first, they all grew worse.
Slothful disorder fill'd his stable,
And sluttish plenty deck'd her table.
Their beer was strong; their wine was port;
Their meal was large; their grace was short.
They gave the poor the remnant meat,
Just when it grew not fit to eat.
  They paid the church and parish rate,
And took, but read not, the receipt;
For which they claim'd their Sunday's due,
Of slumbering in an upper pew.
  No man's defects sought they to know,
So never made themselves a foe:
No man's good deeds they did commend,
So never rais'd themselves a friend.
Nor cherish'd they relations poor;
That might decrease their present store:
Nor barn nor house did they repair;
That might oblige their future heir.

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They neither added nor confounded;
They neither wanted nor abounded.
Each Christmas they accompts did clear,
And wound their bottom round the year.
Nor tear nor smile did they employ
At news of public grief or joy.
When bells were rung and bonfires made,
If ask'd, they ne'er denied their aid:
Their jug was to the ringers carried,
Whoever either died or married:
Their billet at the fire was found,
Whoever was depos'd or crown'd.
Nor good, nor bad, nor fools, nor wise,
They would not learn, nor could advise:
Without love, hatred, joy, or fear,
They led—a kind of—as it were:
Nor wish'd, nor car'd, nor laugh'd, nor cried:
And so they liv'd, and so they died.

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SELECT POEMS

OF

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

EZEKIEL SANFORD.

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LIFE OF BLACKMORE.

RICHARD BLACKMORE was the son of Robert Blackmore, supposed to have been an attorney of Corsham, in Wiltshire. At thirteen, he was sent to the Westminster School; and, in 1668, became a member of Edmund Hall, in Oxford. After the unusual residence of thirteen years, he travelled on the continent to perfect his education; was made a Doctor of Physic at Padua; and returned to England, in about eighteen months.

At some period of his life, he was necessitated to teach a school: his enemies did not forget to keep him reminded of the circumstance afterwards; 'and let it be remembered for his honour, (says Dr. Johnson, who had himself laboured in the same vocation,) that to have been once a schoolmaster is the only reproach, which all the perspicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life.' To make this sentence forcible, the angry biographer was obliged to call this the *only* reproach, which had ever been fixed upon Blackmore, as a man; for, if this was the only reproach, Dr. Johnson was the last person to think it worthy of much solicitude. We learn in the same page, however, that another part of Blackmore's private life was a topic of reproach. He commenced physician; acquired extensive practice; and, on

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the 12th of April, 1687, was elected Fellow of the College. He resided himself at Sadler's Hall, in Cheapside; and his friends were, for the most part, in the city. 'In the early part of Blackmore's time, (says our biographer,) a citizen was a term of reproach; and his place of abode was another topic to which his adversaries had recourse, in the penury of scandal.'

In 1695, Blackmore burst upon the world with *Prince Arthur*, an epic poem, in ten books; written, according to his own account, 'by such catches and starts, and in such occasional uncertain hours as his profession afforded, and for the greatest part in Coffee-houses, or in passing up and down the streets.' This is what Dryden called, 'writing to the rumbling of his coach wheels.' But, however it was written, the public demanded three editions in two years. Dennis attacked it in form: Locke praised, and Molineaux admired it. It is probable, the author knew how good an omen it was, to be assailed by Dennis; and, so little did the insolence of the critic affect him, that he afterwards became his friend, and said, in a later work, that he 'was equal to Boileau in poetry, and superior to him in critical abilities.' This was grateful. Dennis had never been so well repaid for the friendly office of writing other poets into celebrity.

An inexperienced man has little conception of the pile, which is accumulated in no great length of time, by 'catches and starts' of composition. Blackmore continued to visit his patients, and devise scraps of poetry by the way; and, in two years from the publication of *Prince Arthur*, in ten books, behold *King Arthur*, in twelve! This enormity was not to be tolerated. Such a presumption, though we feel disposed to forgive the first offence, becomes outrageous at its repetition; and the wits and critics united in the common cause, against a marauder, who seemed bent upon laying waste the common-

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wealth of letters. But he was happily independent of their praise or censure; and, instead of endeavouring to propitiate or to disperse his assailants, he went steadily on, in his usual avocations; unconcerned at what might be said of him, and determined to write as many more epics, as 'catches and starts' of leisure would permit.

He gave satisfaction to his patients, and obtained the favour of the king; who equally offended the wits, by conferring upon Blackmore the honour of knighthood, and making him one of his physicians in ordinary. They thought, or at least asserted, that it was in consequence of his new poem; but it is not likely, that William the Second encumbered his memory with a single line of either; and it is certain, that, in the dedication to *Alfred*, the author hints at having had 'a greater part in the succession of the house of Hanover than he had ever boasted.' He was an honest man; and little fitted to detect deception, whether it was practised upon him by others, or he practised it upon himself. What part he could have had, in the succession of the House of Hanover, it is difficult to imagine; and he has not condescended to tell us.

One would suppose, that, between medicine and poetry, his hands were sufficiently filled, without busying himself with politics. But, by 1700, three years from the publication of his second epic, he had finished a *Paraphrase of Job*, and a *Satire upon Wit;* in the first of which, he provoked the censure, and, in the last, defied the vengeance, of his critics. They rallied under the standard of Dryden; and lampoons and satires struck around and upon Sir Richard from every quarter. Yet, in 1705, he entered the field with another epic, in ten books. Men are not apt to continue censure, when it attracts no notice; and *Eliza*, being permitted to enjoy, without molestation, whatever celebrity she might acquire, her fate was such as would probably

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have attended *Prince Arthur* and *King Arthur*, had they been left to themselves. Nobody either praised or dispraised the poem; and few ever took the trouble to read it.

It was time to change his hand; and, thinking he might succeed better with living heroes, he wrote, first, a poem upon the *Kit-Cat-Club;* next, *Advice to the Poets how to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough;* and then, *Advice to a Weaver of Tapestry.* Sir Richard Steele was, about this time, in want of some subject to amuse the readers of the *Tatler;* and, lighting upon these poems of Blackmore, ridiculed them in one of his numbers with so little mercy, and such complete effect, that the author was, in future, content to restrict his 'advice' to his patients.

Nothing, however, could repress the fecundity of Blackmore's genius. His head was soon big with verse again; and, in 1712, he produced *Creation, a Philosophical Poem*, in seven Books. This is considered as by far the best of all his works; and we had rather admit the fact, than undertake to compare the poems. There seems to have been a good reason for the difference. 'I have heard from Mr. Draper, an eminent bookseller, (says Dr. Johnson,) an account received by him from Ambrose Philips, that Blackmore, as he proceeded in this poem, laid his manuscript from time to time before a club of wits with whom he associated; and that every man contributed, as he could, either improvement or correction; so that,' said Philips, 'there are no where in the book thirty lines together that now stand as they were originally written.' Still we are inclined to think, with the biographer, that *Creation* should be considered as Blackmore's poem; for, though his friends might polish and improve the surface, the plan and substance must have been exclusively his own.

Nor was it in prose alone, that Blackmore vouch-

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safed to entertain his countrymen. When the *Spectator* disappeared, he resolved, in conjunction with Hughes, to supply the void, which it had left in the amusements of the public; and commenced publishing, three times a week, a paper called the *Lay Monastery*. It was an idea worthy of Blackmore, that a set of literary monks, excluded from life, should undertake to teach others how to live. The chief of the band was a Mr. Johnson; who is endowed with all the very best qualities, both of a critic and an author; and whose character, though neither 'designed with genius,' nor 'delineated with skill,' was transcribed by Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Blackmore. Hughes wrote every third number; but both together could not force the paper beyond forty. Blackmore was not a man to think its discontinuance attributable to any want of intrinsic excellence; and, with honest self-complacency, he collected his forty numbers into a volume, and entitled it a *Sequel to the Spectators*.

So little, indeed, was he discouraged by the result of his periodical effusions, that, in 1716 and 1717, he published two more volumes of Essays; of which the only merit seems to be that which many a dull author may claim—the design to do good. In August, 1717, he became an *Elect* of the College of Physicians; and, in the following October, was nominated *Censor*. The success of his *Creation* induced him to attempt another religious subject; and it was about this time that he published a similar poem upon Redemption, in we know not how many books. He had written three upon the *Nature of Man*, before the appearance of the *Creation*.

Blackmore learned, that congregations were in want of a good metrical translation of the Psalms; and, believing his powers to be co-extensive with his benevolence, he undertook to supply the deficiency, by publishing, in 1719, a *New Version of the Psalms of David, fitted to the Tunes used in*

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Churches. He obtained a license for its admission into public worship; but admitted it never was, and probably never will be. Nor had our poet yet abandoned the Epic Muse; for, in 1723, Alfred was enveloped in twelve books, and came forth unnoticed. The same hero has since been the subject of two other unfortunate epics; one by Henry James Pye, in six books; and the other by Joseph Cottle, in twenty-four. Twelve and six are eighteen, and twenty-four make two-and-forty books of heroic poetry about Alfred!

Blackmore had now lost all his readers; and it is to his degradation, as an author, that Dr. Johnson attributes the deficiency of his future practice, as a physician. 'Contempt, (it is said,) is a kind of gangrene, which, if it siezes one part of a character, corrupts all the rest by degrees.' We think, to speak in the same spirit, that the itch of composition is much more likely to destroy, by degrees, the character of a professional man. The symptoms of authorship, if not checked at their first appearance, become soon confirmed: all other occupation is gradually lost in the disease; and the man is, at last, given over, as a fated and remediless scribbler. It is not necessary, that he should be a contemptible writer; and, indeed, the more eminent he becomes, as an author, the less successful is he likely to be, as a physician, or a lawyer. Blackmore had long enjoyed an extensive practice; and, beginning to feel independent of business, he had little motive to restrain his propensity for composition. He probably neglected his patients; and they forsook him.

The books, which he afterwards produced, in quick succession, will show how completely he was beyond remedy. 'I know not (says Dr. Johnson) whether I can enumerate all the treatises by which he has endeavoured to diffuse the art of healing; for there is scarcely any distemper of dreadful name, which he has not taught the reader how to oppose.

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He has written on the small-pox, with a vehement invective against inoculation; on consumptions, the spleen, the gout, the rheumatism, the king's evil, the dropsy, the jaundice, the stone, the diabetes, and the plague.' He is accused of attempting to degrade his profession; and of showing a supercilious contempt for the ancients. He committed, at any rate, a philological sin, which, to the compiler of a dictionary, is less excusable than any other. 'When the reader finds, what I fear is true, (says Dr. Johnson,) that Blackmore did not know the difference between *aphorism* and *apothegm*, he will not pay much regard to his determinations concerning ancient learning.'

Having completed his course of physic, our author next took up theology. He first composed *Just Prejudices against the Arian Hypothesis;* then *Modern Arians Unmasked;* afterwards, *Natural Theology, or Moral Duties considered apart from Positive; with some Observations on the Desirableness and Necessity of a Supernatural Revelation;* and lastly, *The Accomplished Preacher, or an Essay upon Divine Eloquence.* Besides these, he wrote *A True and Impartial History of the Conspiracy against King William, of Glorious Memory, in the year* 1695. Our catalogue is now finished. The author died on the 8th of October, 1729.

The great defect of Blackmore's mind was a certain feebleness, which, while it could not resist the multitude of thoughts, that crowded upon him, rendered him incapable of digesting them into order, or expressing them with clearness. He had not force enough to extricate himself from metaphysical subtilty; and he was constantly a prey to those obscure and mystical doctrines, which so long tormented the schoolmen. All intellectual phenomena must be accounted for, upon the supposition of ferments, vapours, and animal spirits. The explanation is commonly more inscrutable than the fact:

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what was clear before becomes enveloped in mist and obscurity; and, after thus confounding, what he attempts to analyse, he subjoins with a *hence*, or *whence*, or *therefore*, what he imagines to be the result of the process. Thus, in the Song of Mopas, from *Prince Arthur*, which Molineaux so much admired, we are told,

> ——How earth's wide ball, at Jove's command,
> Did in the midst on airy columns stand;
> And how the soul of plants, in prison held,
> And bound with sluggish fetters, lies conceal'd.
> Till with the Springs warm beams, almost releas'd
> From the dull weight, with which it lay oppress'd,
> Its vigour spreads, and makes the teeming earth
> Heave up and labour with the sprouting birth:
> The active spirit freedom seeks in vain,
> It only works and trusts a stronger chain;
> Urging its prison's sides to break away,*
> It makes that wider, where 'tis force'd to stay:
> Till having formed its living house, it rears
> Its head, and *in a tender plant appears.*

Having, thus, as he thinks, satisfactorily developed the process of germination, he proceeds to his conclusions:—

> *Hence* springs the oak the beauty of the grove,
> Whose stately trunk fierce storms can scarcely move.
> *Hence* grows the cedar, *hence* the swelling vine
> Does round the elm its purple clusters twine.
> *Hence* painted flowers the smiling gardens bless
> Both with their fragrant scent and gaudy dress.

* The Cave of Æolus was one among the multiplicity of thoughts, which overwhelmed the author's intellect.

> Illi indignantes magno cum murmere montis
> Circum claustra fremunt.

The motto of his *Creation* contains these lines, from another part of Virgil:—

> —Spiritus intus alit, totumque infusa per artus
> Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

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Hence the white lily in full beauty grows;
Hence the blue violet, and blushing rose.

The same species of deduction characterizes his prose. 'As to its efficient cause, (says he,) *Wit* owes its production to an extraordinary and peculiar temperament in the constitution of the possessor of it, in which is found a concurrence of regular and exalted ferments, and an affluence of animal spirits, refined and rectified to a great degree of purity; *whence*, being understood with vivacity, brightness, and celerity, as well in their reflections as direct motions, they become proper instruments for the sprightly operations of the mind; *by which means* the imagination can with great facility range the wide field of nature, contemplate an infinite variety of objects, and, by observing the similitude and agreement of their several qualities, single out and abstract, and then suite and unite those ideas which will best serve its purpose. *Hence* beautiful allusions, surprising metaphors, and admirable sentiments, are always ready at hand: and, while the fancy is full of images, collected from innumerable objects and their different qualities, relations and habitudes, it can at pleasure dress a common notion in a strange but becoming garb; *by which*, as before observed, the same thought will appear a new one, to the great delight and wonder of the hearer.'

There is no doubt, that Blackmore honestly supposed this to be a philosophical and clear account of Wit. 'What we call *Genius* (he then proceeds) results from this particular happy complexion in the first formation of the person who enjoys it, and is Nature's gift, but diversified by various specific characters and limitations, as its active fire is blended and allayed by different proportions of phlegm, or reduced and regulated by the contrast of opposite ferments. *Therefore*, as there appears in the

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composition of a facetious genius a greater or less, though still inferior, degree of judgment and prudence, one man of wit will be varied and distinguished from another.' We will transcribe a part of one more passage, which, in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, is 'better imagined, and better expressed, than could be expected from the common tenour of his prose.' What is 'imagined,' or what 'expressed,' we have tried in vain to discover. 'As the several combinations of splenetic madness and folly produce an infinite variety of irregular understanding, so the amicable accommodation and alliance between several virtues and vices produce an equal diversity in the dispositions and manners of mankind; *whence it comes to pass*, that as many monstrous and absurd productions are found in the moral as in the intellectual world.' Here may be a glimpse at meaning; but it is smothered with a heap of words.

It is impossible, however, to have a general contempt for Blackmore, after reading his books upon *Creation*; and it is one of the numerous debts we owe to Dr. Johnson, that he has rescued that poem from the common fate of the author's productions. It is, in almost every respect, an exception to his other works. His arguments are acute, his descriptions rich, his expressions clear, and his numbers harmonious. The parts follow each other with logical order; and the philosophy is so intermingled with description, that the mind is led from sentence to sentence, and from book to book, with little irksomeness or fatigue. There is now and then, indeed, a bad line, or a flat allusion, which keeps us reminded of Blackmore; but occasional failure is lost in general success; and it is peculiarly in the perusal of such an author, that one feels disposed to excuse the blemishes of a part, when the work pleases him as a whole. We shall transcribe a specimen both of the didactic, and descriptive pas-

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sages. The author grants, for the sake of argument, that the earth might be composed, and placed where it is, without the aid of a Supreme Being; yet, what he asks, will set it in motion? and, if not set in motion, what would it become, but an interminable desart? One half must be in endless night; and the other in perpetual day.

This ne'er would see one kind refreshing ray;
That doom'd to light, and curs'd with endless day;
A cold Icelandean desert one would grow;
One, like Sicilian furnaces, would glow.
That nature may this fatal error shun,
Move, which will please you best, the earth or sun.
But, say, from what great builder's magazines
You'll engines fetch, what strong, what vast machines
Will you employ to give this motion birth,
And whirl so swiftly round the sun or earth?
Yet, learned heads, by what mechanic laws
Will you of either orb this motion cause?
Why do they move? Why in a circle? Why
With such a measure of velocity?
Say, why the earth—if not the earth, the sun
Does through his winding road the zodiac run?
Why do revolving orbs their tracks sublime
So constant keep that from the birth of time?
They never varied their accustom'd place,
Nor lost a minute in so long a race?

B. I.

The following description well speaks its own praise:—

See how sublime th' uplifted mountains rise,
And with their pointed heads invade the skies!
How the high cliffs their craggy arms extend
Distinguish states, and sever'd realms defend!
How ambient shores confine the restless deep,
And in their ancient bounds the billows keep!
The hollow vales their smiling pride unfold:
What rich abundance do their blossoms hold!
Regard their lovely verdure, ravish'd view
The party colour'd flowers of various hue!

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Not eastern monarchs, on their nuptial day,
In dazzling gold and purple shine so gay
As the bright natives of th' unlabour'd field,
Unvers'd in spinning, and in looms unskill'd.*
See, how the ripening fruits the gardens crown,
Imbibe the sun, and make his light their own!
See the sweet brooks in silver masses creep,
Enrich the meadows, and supply the deep;
While from their weeping urns the fountains flow,
And vital moisture, where they pass, bestow!
Admire the narrow stream, and spreading lake,
The proud aspiring grove, and humble brake:
How do the forests and the woods delight!
How the sweet glades, and openings, charm the sight!
Observe the pleasant lawn and airy plain,
The fertile furrows rich with various grain:
How useful all! How all conspire to grace
Th' extended earth, and beautify her face!

B. I.

* We except this line, which, to be sure, is a most frigid paraphrase of the verse in St. Luke: 'Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet, I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of those.' It is to Blackmore's credit, that he undertook to imitate so beautiful a passage; and, if we except the last line, he has imitated it with tolerable success. Milton had set him the example:—

———Favonius re-inspires
The frozen earth, and clothes in fresh attire
The lilly and the rose, that neither sow'd nor spun.

Sonnet to Mr. Lawrence.

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A

SUMMARY ACCOUNT

OF THE

FOLLOWING POEM,

AND WHAT IS CONTAINED IN EACH BOOK.

THE design of this work is to demonstrate the existence of a Divine Eternal Mind.

The arguments used for this end are taken from the various marks of wisdom and artful contrivance, which are evident to observation in the several parts of the material world, and the faculties of the human soul.

The *first* book contains the proof of a Deity, from the instances of design and choice, which occur in the structure and qualities of the earth and sea.

The *second* pursues the proof of the same proposition, THERE IS A GOD, from the celestial motions, and more fully from the appearances in the solar system, and the air.

In the *third*, the objections which are brought by atheistical philosophers against the hypothesis established in the two preceding books, are answered.

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In the *fourth*, is laid down the hypothesis of the Atomists or Epicureans, and other irreligious philosophers, and confuted.

In the *fifth*, the doctrine of the Fatalists, or Aristotelians, who make the world to be eternal, is considered and subverted.

In the *sixth*, the argument of the two first books is resumed, and the existence of God demonstrated from the prudence and art discovered in the several parts of the body of man.

In the *seventh*, the same demonstration is carried on from the contemplation of the instincts in brute animals, and the faculties and operations of the soul of man.

The book concludes with a recapitulation of what has been treated of, and a hymn to the Creator of the World.

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CREATION;

A

PHILOSOPHICAL POEM.

IN SEVEN BOOKS.

'Principio cœlum, ac terras camposque liquentes,
Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque astra
Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.
Inde hominum, pecudumque genus, viteque volantum,
Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore pontus.'

Virg.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The proposition. The invocation. The existence of a GOD demonstrated, from the marks of wisdom, choice, and art, which appear in the visible world, and infer an intelligent and free cause. This evinced from the contemplation, I. of the earth. 1. Its situation. 2. The cohesion of its parts, not to be solved by any hypothesis yet produced. 3. Its stability. 4. Its structure, or the order of its parts. 5. Its motion, diurnal and annual, or else the motion of the sun in both those respects. The cause of these motions not yet accounted for by any philosopher. 6. Its outside or face; the beauties and conveniences of it; its moun-

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tains, lakes, and rivers. II. The existence of a GOD proved from the marks and impressions of prudence, and design, which appear in the sea. 1. In its formation. 2. The proportion of its parts in respect of the earthy. 3. Its situation. 4. The contexture of its parts. 5. Its brackish or briny quality. 6. Its flux and reflux.

No more of courts, of triumphs, or of arms,
No more of valour's force, or beauty's charms;
The themes of vulgar lays with just disdain
I leave unsung, the flocks, the amorous swain,
The pleasures of the land, and terrors of the main.
How abject, how inglorious 'tis to lie
Grovelling in dust and darkness, when on high
Empires immense, and rolling worlds of light,
To range their heavenly scenes, the muse invite!
I meditate to soar above the skies,
To heights unknown, through ways untried to rise:
I would the' Eternal from his works assert,
And sing the wonders of creating art.
While I this unexampled task essay,
Pass awful gulfs, and beat my painful way,
Celestial Dove! divine assistance bring,
Sustain me on thy strong-extended wing,
That I may reach the' Almighty's sacred throne,
And make his causeless power, the cause of all things, known.
Thou dost the full extent of nature see,
And the wide realms of vast immensity:
Eternal Wisdom thou dost comprehend,
Rise to her heights, and to her depths descend:
The Father's sacred counsels thou canst tell,
Who in his bosom didst for ever dwell.

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Thou on the deep's dark face, immortal Dove!
Thou with Almighty energy didst move
On the wild waves; incumbent didst display
Thy genial wings, and hatch primeval day.
Order from thee, from thee distinction came,
And all the beauties of the wondrous frame.
Hence stamp'd on nature we perfection find,
Fair as the' idea in the Eternal Mind.

See, through this vast extended theatre
Of skill divine what shining marks appear!
Creating power is all around express'd,
The God discover'd, and his care confess'd.
Nature's high birth her heavenly beauties show;
By every feature we the parent know.
The' expanded spheres, amazing to the sight!
Magnificent with stars and globes of light,
The glorious orbs, which heaven's bright host compose;
The' imprison'd sea, that restless ebbs and flows:
The fluctuating fields of liquid air,
With all the curious meteors hovering there,
And the wide regions of the land, proclaim
The Power Divine, that rais'd the mighty frame.

What things soe'er are to an end refer'd,
And in their motions still that end regard,
Always the fitness of the means respect,
These as conducive choose, and those reject,
Must by a judgment foreign and unknown
Be guided to their end, or by their own;
For to design an end, and to pursue
That end by means, and have it still in view,
Demands a conscious, wise, reflecting cause,
Which freely moves, and acts by reason's laws;

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That can deliberate, means elect, and find
Their due connection with the end design'd.
And since the world's wide frame does not include
A cause with such capacities endued;
Some other cause o'er nature must preside,
Which gave her birth, and does her motions guide.
And here behold the cause, which GOD we name,
The source of beings, and the mind supreme;
Whose perfect wisdom, and whose prudent care,
With one confederate voice, unnumber'd worlds declare.

See, how the earth has gain'd that very place,
Which, of all others in the boundless space,
Is most convenient, and will best conduce
To the wise ends requir'd for nature's use.
You, who the Mind and Cause Supreme deny,
Nor on his aid to form the world rely,
Must grant, had perfect wisdom been employ'd
To find, through all the' interminable void,
A seat most proper, and which best became
The earth and sea, it must have been the same.

Now who can this surprising fact conceive,
Who this event fortuitous believe,
That the brute earth, unguided, should embrace
The only useful, only proper place,
Of all the millions in the empty space?

Could stupid atoms, with impetuous speed,
By different roads and adverse ways proceed;
From regions opposite begin their flight,
That here they might rencounter, here unite?
What charms could these terrestrial vagrants see
In this one point of all immensity,
That all the' enamour'd troops should thither flow?
Did they its useful situation know?

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Book 1.

Thou on the deep's dark face, immortal Dove:
Thou with Almighty energy didst move
On the wild waves; incumbent didst display
Thy genial wings, and hatch primeval day.
Order from thee, from thee distinction came,
And all the beauties of the wondrous frame.
Hence stamp'd on nature we perfection find,
Fair as the' idea in the Eternal Mind.
See, through this vast extended theatre
Of skill divine what shining marks appear!
Creating power is all around express'd,
The God discover'd, and his care confess'd.
Nature's high birth her heavenly beauties show:
By every feature we the parent know.
The' exp[illegible] spheres, amazing to the sight!
Magnif[illegible] stars and globes of light,
The [illegible] which heaven's bright host [illegible]

[illegible], that restless ebbs and [illegible]
[illegible]ds of liquid air,
[illegible] meteors hovering there [illegible]
of the land, proclai[illegible]
[illegible] at rais'd the [illegible]
to an end [illegible]
that end [illegible]
[illegible]ons still [illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]ght; [s
[illegible]us void
[illegible]s above.
[illegible]p and down
[illegible]own;
[illegible]m morn to morr
[illegible]n;
[illegible]se in air
[illegible]orb appear:
[illegible]uld control,
[illegible] whole.
[illegible]und,
[illegible]und,

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Still shake off all things on their surface plac'd,
And to a distance from the centre cast.
  If ponderous atoms are so much in love
With this one point, that all will thither move,
Give them the situation they desire:
But let us then, ye sages, next inquire
What cause of their cohesion can you find;
What props support, what chains the fabric bind?
Why do not beasts that move, or stones that lie
Loose on the field, through distant regions fly?
Or why do fragments, from a mountain rent,
Tend to the earth with such a swift descent?
  Those who ascribe this one determin'd course
Of ponderous things to gravitating force,
Refer us to a quality occult,
To senseless words, for which while they insult
With just contempt the famous Stagyrite, [light.
The schools should bless the world with clearer
Some, the round earth's cohesion to secure,
For that hard task employ magnetic power.
Remark, say they, the globe; with wonder own
Its nature, like the fam'd attractive stone.
This has its axis, so the observer tells,
Meridians, poles, equator, parallels.
To the terrestrial poles by constant fate
The' obsequious poles themselves accommodate;
And, when of this position dispossess'd,
They move, and strive, nor ever will they rest,
Till their lov'd situation they regain,
Where pleas'd they settle, and unmov'd remain.
And should you (so experience does decide)
Into small parts the wondrous stone divide,
Ten thousand of minutest size express
The same propension which the large possess.

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Hence all the globe ('tis said) we may conclude
With this prevailing energy endued:
That this attractive, this surprising stone
Has no peculiar virtue of its own;
Nothing but what is common to the whole,
To sides, to axis, and to either pole.
The mighty magnet from the centre darts
This strong, though subtle force, through all the parts;
Its active rays, ejaculated thence,
Irradiate all the wide circumference.
While every part is in proportion bless'd,
And of its due attractive power possess'd;
While adverse ways the adverse atoms draw
With the same strength, by nature's constant law
Balanc'd and fix'd; they can no longer move;
Through gulfs immense no more unguided rove.
If cords are pull'd two adverse ways, we find
The more we draw them, they the faster bind.
So when with equal vigour nature strains
This way and that these fine mechanic chains,
They fix the earth, they part to part unite,
Preserve their structure, and prevent their flight.
Pressure (they say) and weight, we must disown,
As things occult, by no ideas known;
And on the earth's magnetic power depend
To fix its seat, its union to defend.
Let us this fam'd hypothesis survey,
And with attentive thought remark the way,
How earth's attractive parts their force display.
The mass ('tis said) from its wide bosom pours
Torrents of atoms, and eternal showers
Of fine magnetic darts, of matter made
So subtle, marble they with ease pervade:

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Refin'd, and, next to incorporeal, thin;
Not by Ausonian glasses to be seen.
These emanations take their constant flight
Swift from the earth, as from the sun the light;
To a determin'd distance they ascend,
And there inflect their course, and downward tend.
  What can insult unequal reason more,
Than this magnetic, this mysterious power?
That cords and chains, beyond conception small,
Should gird and bind so fast this mighty ball!
That active rays should spring from every part,
And, though so subtle, should such force exert!
That the light legions should be sent abroad,
Range all the air, and traverse every road!
To stated limits should excursions make,
Then backward of themselves their journey take;
Should in their way to solid bodies cling,
And home to earth the captive matter bring;
Where all things on its surface spread are bound
By their coercive vigour to the ground!
Can this be done without a guide Divine?
Should we to this hypothesis incline,
Say, does not here conspicuous wisdom shine?
Who can enough magnetic force admire?
Does it not counsel and design require
To give the earth this wondrous energy,
In such a measure, such a just degree,
That it should still perform its destin'd task,
As nature's ends and various uses ask?
  For, should our globe have had a greater share
Of this strong force, by which the parts cohere,
Things had been bound by such a powerful chain,
That all would fix'd and motionless remain;

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All men, like statues, on the earth would stand,
Nor would they move the foot, or stretch the hand;
Birds would not range the skies, nor beasts the woods,
Nor could the fish divide the stiffen'd floods.
Again, had this strange energy been less,
Defect had been as fatal as excess.
For want of cement strong enough to bind
The structure fast, huge ribs of rock, disjoin'd
Without an earthquake, from their base would start,
And hills unhing'd from their deep roots depart.
And, while our orb perform'd its daily race,
All beings, found upon his ample face,
Would, by that motion dissipated, fly
Whirl'd from the globe, and scatter through the sky;
They must, obedient to mechanic laws,
Assemble where the stronger magnet draws;
Whether the sun that stronger magnet proves,
Or else some planet's orb that nearer moves.
Who can unfold the cause that does recal
Magnetic rays, and make them backward fall?
If these effluvia, which do upward tend,
Because less heavy than the air, ascend;
Why do they ever from their height retreat,
And why return to seek their central seat?
From the same cause, ye sons of art, declare
Can they by turns descend, and rise in air?
Prodigious 'tis, that one attractive ray
Should this way bend, the next an adverse way;
For, should the' unseen magnetic jets descend
All the same way, they could not gain their end;
They could not draw and bind the fabric fast,
Unless alike they every part embrac'd.

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How does Cartesius all his sinews strain,
How much he labours, and how much in vain,
The earth's attractive vigour to explain!
This bold contriver thus his thoughts conveys:
Incessant streams of thin magnetic rays
Gush from their fountains with impetuous force,
In either pole, then take an adverse course:
Those from the southern pole the northern seek;
The southern those that from the northern break;
In either pole these rays emitted meet
Small pores provided, for their figures fit;
Still to and fro they circulating pass,
Hold all the frame, and firmly bind the mass.
Thus he the parts of earth from flight restrains,
And girds it fast by fine imagin'd chains.

But oh! how dark is human reason found!
How vain the man with wit and learning crown'd!
How feeble all his strength when he essays
To trace dark Nature, and detect her ways;
Unless he calls its Author to his aid,
Who every secret spring of motion laid,
Who over all his wondrous works presides,
And to their useful ends their causes guides:
These paths in vain are by inquirers trod;
There's no philosophy without a God!

Admir'd Cartesius, let the curious know,
If your magnetic atoms always flow
From pole to pole, what form'd their double source,
What spur'd, what gave them their inflicted course?
Tell, what could drill and perforate the poles,
And to the' attractive rays adapt their holes?
A race so long what prompts them to pursue?
Have the blind troops the' important end in view?

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How are they sure they in the poles shall meet
Pores of a figure to their figure fit!
Are they with such sagacity endued
To know, if this their journey be pursued,
They shall the earth's constructure closely bind,
And to the centre keep the parts confin'd?
Let us review this whole magnetic scheme,
Till wiser heads a wiser model frame.
For its formation let fit atoms start,
To one determin'd point, from every part.
Encountering there from regions opposite,
They clash, and interrupt each other's flight;
And, rendezvousing with an adverse course,
Produce an equal poise, by equal force:
For while the parts by laws magnetic act,
And are at once attracted, and attract: [field,
While match'd in strength they keep the doubtful
And neither overcome, and neither yield,
To happy purpose they their vigour spend;
For these contentions in the balance end,
Which must in liquid air the globe suspend.
Besides materials which are brute and blind,
Did not this work require a knowing mind,
Who for the task should fit detachments choose
From all the atoms, which their host diffuse
Through the wide regions of the boundless space,
And for their rendezvous appoint the place?
Who should command, by his almighty nod,
These chosen troops, unconscious of the road,
And unacquainted with the' appointed end,
Their marches to begin, and thither tend;
Direct them all to take the nearest way,
Whence none of all the' unnumber'd millions stray;

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Make them advance with such an equal pace,
From all the adverse regions of the space,
That they at once should reach the destin'd place;
Should muster there, and round the centre swarm,
And draw together in a globous form?
  Grant, that by mutual opposition made,
Of adverse parts, their mutual flight is staid;
That thus the whole is in a balance laid;
Does it not all mechanic heads confound,
That troops of atoms, from all parts around,
Of equal number, and of equal force,
Should to this single point direct their course;
That so the counter-pressure every way,
Of equal vigour, might their motions stay,
And, by a steady poise, the whole in quiet lay?
  Besides, the structure of the earth regard:
For firmness how is all its frame prepar'd!
With what amazing skill is the vast building rear'd!
Metals and veins of solid stone are found
The chief materials which the globe compound.
See, how the hills, which high in air ascend,
From pole to pole their lofty lines extend.
These strong, unshaken mounds, resist the shocks
Of tides and seas tempestuous, while the rocks,
That secret in a long-continued vein
Pass through the earth, the ponderous pile sustain:
These mighty girders, which the fabric bind,
These ribs robust and vast, in order join'd;
These subterranean walls, disposed with art,
Such strength and such stability impart,
That storms above, and earthquakes under ground,
Break not the pillars, nor the work confound.

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Give to the earth a form orbicular,
Let it be pois'd, and hung in ambient air;
Give it the situation to the sun
Such as is only fit; when this is done,
Suppose it still remain'd a lazy heap;
From what we grant, you no advantage reap.
You either must the earth from rest disturb,
Or roll around the heavens the solar orb.
Else what a dreadful face will nature wear!
How horrid will these lonesome seats appear!
This ne'er would see one kind refreshing ray;
That would be ruin'd, but a different way,
Condemn'd to light, and curs'd with endless day:
A cold Icelandian desert one would grow;
One, like Sicilian furnaces, would glow.
That nature may this fatal error shun,
Move, which will please you best, the earth or sun.
But, say, from what great builder's magazines
You'll engines fetch, what strong, what vast machines
Will you employ to give this motion birth,
And whirl so swiftly round the sun or earth?
Yet, learned heads, by what mechanic laws
Will you of either orb this motion cause!
Why do they move? why in a circle? why
With such a measure of velocity?
Say, why the earth—if not the earth, the sun
Does through his winding road the zodiac run?
Why do revolving orbs their tracks sublime
So constant keep, that since the birth of time
They never varied their accustom'd place,
Nor lost a minute in so long a race?
But hold! perhaps I rudely press too far;
You are not vers'd in reasoning so severe.

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To a first question your reply's at hand;
Ask but a second, and you speechless stand.
You swim at top, and on the surface strive,
But to the depths of nature never dive:
For if you did, instructed you'd explore
Divine contrivance, and a God adore!
Yet sons of art one curious piece devise,
From whose constructure motion shall arise.
Machines, to all philosophers 'tis known,
Move by a foreign impulse not their own.
Then let Gassendus choose what frame he please,
By which to turn the heavenly orbs with ease;
Those orbs must rest, till by the' exerted force
Of some first mover, they begin their course:
Mere disposition, mere mechanic art,
Can never motion to the globes impart;
And, if they could, the marks of wise design
In that contrivance would conspicuous shine.
These questions still recur: we still demand,
What moves them first, and puts them off at hand?
What makes them this one way their race direct,
While they a thousand other ways reject?
Why do they never once their course inflect?
Why do they roll with such an equal pace,
And to a moment still perform their race?
Why earth or sun diurnal stages keep?
In spiral tracks, why through the zodiac creep?
Who can account for this, unless they say
These orbs the' Eternal Mind's command obey,
Who bad them move, did all their motions guide,
To each its destin'd province did divide;
Which, to complete, he gave them motive-power,
That shall, as long as he does will, endure?

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Thus we the frame of nature have express'd;
Now view the earth in finish'd beauty dress'd:
The various scenes, which various charms display,
Through all the' extended theatre survey.
See how sublime the' uplifted mountains rise,
And with their pointed heads invade the skies!
How the high cliffs their craggy arms extend,
Distinguish states, and sever'd realms defend!
How ambient shores confine the restless deep,
And in their ancient bounds the billows keep!
The hollow vales their smiling pride unfold;
What rich abundance do their bosoms hold!
Regard their lovely verdure, ravish'd view,
The party-colour'd flowers of various hue!
Not eastern monarchs on their nuptial day,
In dazzling gold and purple shine so gay
As the bright natives of the unlabour'd field,
Unvers'd in spinning, and in looms unskill'd.
See, how the ripening fruits the gardens crown,
Imbibe the sun, and make his light their own!
See the sweet brooks in silver mazes creep,
Enrich the meadows, and supply the deep;
While from their weeping urns the fountains flow,
And vital moisture, where they pass, bestow!
Admire the narrow stream, and spreading lake,
The proud aspiring grove, and humble brake:
How do the forests and the woods delight!
How the sweet glades, and openings, charm the [sight!
Observe the pleasant lawn and airy plain,
The fertile furrows rich with various grain;
How useful all! how all conspire to grace
The' extended earth, and beautify her face!
Now, see, with how much art the parts are made,
With how much wisdom are the strata laid,

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Of different weight, and of a different kind,
Of sundry forms, for sundry ends design'd!
Here, in their beds the finish'd minerals rest,
There, the rich wombs the seeds of gold digest.
Here, in fit moulds, to Indian nations known,
Are cast the several kinds of precious stone;
The diamond here, by mighty monarchs worn,
Fair as the star that beautifies the morn;
And, splendid by the sun's embodied ray,
The rubies there their crimson light display;
There, marble's various colour'd veins are spread;
Here, of bitumen unctuous stores are bred.
What skill on all its surface is bestow'd,
To make the earth for man a fit abode?
The upper moulds, with active spirits stor'd,
And rich in verdant progeny, afford
The flowery pasture, and the shady wood,
To men their physic, and to beasts their food.
  Proceed yet further, and a prospect take
Of the swift stream, and of the standing lake.
Had not the deep been form'd, that might contain
All the collected treasures of the main,
The earth had still o'erwhelm'd with water stood,
To man an uninhabitable flood.
Yet had not part as kindly staid behind,
In the wide cisterns of the lakes confin'd;
Did not the springs and rivers drench the land,
Our globe would grow a wilderness of sand;
The plants and groves, the tame and savage beast,
And man, their lord, would die with drought op-
Now, as you see, the floating element [press'd.
Part loose in streams, part in the ocean pent,
So wisely is dispos'd, as may conduce
To man's delight, or necessary use.

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See how the mountains in the midst divide
The noblest regions, that from either side
The streams, which to the hills their currents owe,
May every way along the valley flow,
And verdant wealth on all the soil bestow!
So Atlas, and the mountains of the moon,
From north to south, in lofty ridges run
Through Afric realms, whence falling waters lave
The' inferior regions with a winding wave.
They various rivers give to various soil,
Niger to Guinea, and to Egypt Nile.
So from the towering Alps, on different sides,
Dissolving snows descend in numerous tides,
Which in the vale beneath their parties join
To form the Rhone, the Danube, and the Rhine.
So Caucasus, aspiring Taurus so,
And fam'd Imaüs, ever white with snow,
Through eastern climes their lofty lines extend,
And this and that way ample currents send.
A thousand rivers make their crooked way,
And disembogue their floods into the sea;
Whence, should they ne'er by secret roads retire,
And to the hills, from whence they came, aspire;
They by their constant streams would so increase
The watery stores, and raise so high the seas,
That the wide hollow would not long contain
The' unequal treasures of the swelling main;
Scorning the mounds which now its tide withstand,
The sea would pass the shores, and drown the land.
Tell, by what paths, what subterranean ways,
Back to the fountain's head the sea conveys
The refluent rivers, and the land repays?
Tell, what superior, what controlling cause
Makes waters, in contempt of nature's laws,

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Climb up, and gain the' aspiring mountain's height,
Swift and forgetful of their native weight?
What happy works, what engines under-ground,
What instruments of curious art are found,
Which must with everlasting labour play,
Back to their springs the rivers to convey,
And keep their correspondence with the sea?

Perhaps you'll say, their streams the rivers owe
In part to rain, in part to melting snow;
And that the' attracted watery vapours rise
From lakes and seas, and fill the lower skies:
These, when condens'd, the airy region pours
On the dry earth in rain, or gentle showers;
The' insinuating drops sink through the sand,
And pass the porous strainers of the land;
Which fresh supplies of watery riches bring
To every river's head, to each exhausted spring;
The streams are thus, their losses to repair,
Back to their source transmitted to the air;
The waters still their circling course maintain,
Flow down in rivers, and return in rain;
And on the soil with heat immoderate dried,
To which the rain's pure treasures are denied,
The mountains more sublime in ether rise,
Transfix the clouds, and tower amidst the skies;
The snowy fleeces, which their heads involve,
Still stay in part, and still in part dissolve;
Torrents and loud impetuous cataracts
Through roads abrupt, and rude unfashion'd tracts,
Roll down the lofty mountain's channell'd sides,
And to the vale convey their foaming tides;
At length, to make their various currents one,
The congregated floods together run;

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These confluent streams make some great river's
By stores still melting and descending fed; [head,
Thus from the' aspiring mountains of the moon
Dissolving treasures rush in torrents down,
Which pass the sun-burnt realms and sandy soil,
And bless the' Egyptian nation with their Nile;
Then whosoe'er his secret rise would know,
Must climb the hills, and trace his head in snow;
And through the Rhine, the Danube, and the Rhone,
All ample rivers of our milder zone,
While they advance along the flats and plains,
Spread by the showers augmented, and the rains;
Yet these their source and first beginning owe
To stores, that from the Alpine mountains flow;
Hence, when the snows in winter cease to weep,
And undissolv'd their flaky texture keep,
The banks with ease their humble streams contain,
Which swell in summer, and those banks disdain.
Be this account allow'd, say do not here
The' impressions of consummate art appear?
In every spacious realm a rising ground,
Observers tell, is in the middle found;
That all the streams, which flow from either side,
May through the valleys unobstructed glide.
What various kingdoms does the Danube lave,
Before the Euxine sea receives its wave!
How many nations of the sun-burnt soil
Fam'd Niger bless! how many drink the Nile!
Through what vast regions, near the rising sun,
Does Indus, Ganges, and Hydaspes, run!
What happy empires, wide Euphrates, teem,
And pregnant grow by thy prolific stream!
How many spacious countries does the Rhine,
In winding banks, and mazes serpentine,

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Traverse, before he splits in Belgia's plain,
And lost in sand creeps to the German main!
Floods which through Indian realms their course
That Mexico enrich, and wash Peru, [pursue,
With their unwearied streams yet further pass,
Before they reach the sea, and end their race.
And since the rivers and the floods demand,
For their descent, a prone and sinking land,
Does not this due declivity declare
A wise Director's providential care?
  See, how the streams, advancing to the main
Through crooked channels, draw their crystal train!
While lingering thus, they in meanders glide,
They scatter verdant life on either side.
The valleys smile, and with their flowery face
And wealthy births confess the floods embrace.
But this great blessing would in part be lost,
Nor would the meads their blooming plenty boast:
Did uncheck'd rivers draw their fluid train
In lines direct, and rapid seek the main.
  The sea does next demand our view; and there
No less the marks of perfect skill appear.
When first the atoms to the congress came,
And by their concourse form'd the mighty frame,
What did the liquid to the' assembly call,
To give their aid to form the ponderous ball?
First, tell us, why did any come? next, why
In such a disproportion to the dry?
Why were the moist in number so outdone,
That to a thousand dry they are but one?
When they united, and together clung,
When undistinguish'd in one heap they hung.
How was the union broke, the knot untied?
What did the' entangled elements divide?

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Why did the moist disjoined, without respect
To their less weight, the lowest seat elect?
Could they dispense to lie below the land,
With nature's law, and unrepeal'd command;
Which gives to lighter things the greatest height,
And seats inferior to superior weight?
Did they foresee, unless they lay so low,
The restless flood the land would overflow,
By which the delug'd earth would useless grow?
What, but a conscious agent, could provide
The spacious hollow, where the waves reside?
Where, barr'd with rock and fenc'd with hills, the deep
Does in its womb the floating treasures keep;
And all the raging regiments restrain
In stated limits, that the swelling main
May not in triumph o'er the frontier ride,
And through the land licentious spread its tide?
What other cause the frame could so contrive,
That, when tempestuous winds the ocean drive,
They cannot break the tie, nor disunite
The waves, which roll connected in their flight?
Their bands, though slack, no dissolution fear,
The' unsever'd parts the greatest pressure bear,
Though loose, and fit to flow, they still cohere.
This apt, this wise contexture of the sea,
Makes it the ships, driv'n by the winds, obey;
Whence hardy merchants sail from shore to shore,
Bring Indian spices home, and Guinea's ore.
When you with liquid stores have fill'd the deep,
What does the flood from putrefaction keep?
Should it lie stagnant in its ample seat,
The sun would through it spread destructive heat.
The wise Contriver, on his end intent,
Careful this fatal error to prevent,

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And keep the waters from corruption free,
Mix'd them with salt, and season'd all the sea.
What other cause could this effect produce?
The brackish tincture through the main diffuse?
You, who to solar beams this task assign,
To scald the waves, and turn the tide to brine,
Reflect, that all the fluid stores, which sleep
In the remotest caverns of the deep,
Have of the briny force a greater share
Than those above, that meet the ambient air.
Others (but oh how much in vain!) erect
Mountains of salt, the ocean to infect.
Who, vers'd in nature, can describe the land,
Or fix the place on which those mountains stand?
Why have those rocks so long unwasted stood,
Since, lavish of their stock, they through the flood
Have, ages past, their melting crystal spread,
And with their spoils the liquid regions fed?
Yet more, the wise Contriver did provide
(To keep the sea from stagnating) the tide;
Which now we see advance, and now subside.
If you exclude this great Directing Mind,
Declare what cause of this effect you find.
You, who this globe round its own axis drive,
From that rotation this event derive:
You say the sea, which with unequal pace
Attends the earth in this its rapid race,
Does with its waves fall backward to the west,
And, thence repell'd, advances to the east:
While this revolving motion does endure,
The deep must reel, and rush from shore to shore
Thus to the setting, and the rising sun,
Alternate tides in stated order run.
The' experiments you bring us to explain
This notion, are impertinent and vain:

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An orb or ball round its own axis whirl,
Will not the motion to a distance hurl
Whatever dust or sand you on it place,
And drops of water from its convex face?
If this rotation does the seas affect,
The rapid motion rather would eject
The stores the low capacious caves contain,
And from its ample basin cast the main;
Aloft in air would make the ocean fly,
And dash its scatter'd waves against the sky.
  If you, to solve the' appearance, have recourse
To the bright sun's or moon's impulsive force;
Do you, who call for demonstration, tell
How distant orbs the' obedient flood impel?
This song mysterious influence explain,
By which, to swell the waves, they press the main.
But if you choose magnetic power, and say
Those bodies by attraction move the sea;
Till with new light you make this secret known,
And tell us, how 'tis by attraction done;
You leave the mind in darkness still involv'd,
Nor have you, like philosophers, resolv'd
The doubts, which we to reasoning men refer,
But with a cant of words abuse the ear.
  Those who assert the lunar orb presides
O'er humid bodies, and the ocean guides;
Whose waves obsequious ebb, or swelling run,
With the declining or increasing moon;
With reason seem her empire to maintain,
As mistress of the rivers and the main,
Perhaps her active influences cause
The' alternate flood, and give the billow laws;
The waters seem her orders to obey,
And ebb and flow, determin'd by her sway.

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Grant that the deep this foreign sovereign owns,
That mov'd by her it this and that way runs:
Say, by what force she makes the ocean swell;
Does she attract the waters, or impel?
How does she rule the rolling waves and guide,
By fix'd and constant laws, the restless tide?
Why does she dart her force to that degree,
As gives so just a motion to the sea,
That it should flow no more, no more retire,
Than nature's various useful ends require?
A Mind Supreme you therefore must approve,
Whose high command caus'd matter first to move:
Who still preserves its course, and, with respect
To his wise ends, all motions does direct.
He to the silver moon this province gave,
And fix'd her empire o'er the briny wave;
Endued her with such just degrees of power,
As might his aims and wise designs procure,
Might agitate and work the troubled deep,
And rolling waters from corruption keep,
But not impel them o'er their bounds of sand,
Nor force the wasteful deluge o'er the land.

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BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

The introduction. The numerous and important blessings of religion. The existence of a GOD demonstrated, from the wisdom and design which appear in the motions of the heavenly orbs; but more particularly in the solar system. 1. In the situation of the sun, and its due distance from the earth. The fatal consequences of its having been placed otherwise than it is. 2. In its diurnal motion, whence the change of day and night proceeds: then in its annual motion, whence arise the different degrees of heat and cold. The confinement of the sun between the tropics, not to be accounted for by any philosophical hypothesis. The difficulties of the same, if the earth moves, and the sun rests. The spring of the sun's motion, not to be explained by any irreligious philosophy. The contemplation of the solar light, and the uses made of it for the end proposed. The appearances in the solar system not to be solved, but by asserting a GOD. The systems of Ptolemy, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler, considered. The solar system described, and compared with the fixed stars, which are supposed centres of the like systems. Reflections on that comparison. The hypothesis of Epicurus, in relation to the motion of the sun. Wisdom and design discovered in the air; in its useful structure, its elasticity, its various meteors; the wind, the rain, thunder, and lightning. A short contemplation of the vegetable kind.

CARUS,* by hardy Epicurus taught,
From Greece to Rome his impious system brought;

* Titus Lucretius Carus; whose philosophical poem, *De naturâ rerum*, is sufficiently known.

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Then war with heaven he did insulting wage,
And breath'd against the gods immortal rage:
'See, (he exclaims) the source of all our woe!
Our fears and sufferings from religion flow.'
We grant, a train of mischiefs oft proceeds
From superstitious rites and penal creeds;
But view Religion in her native charms,
Dispersing blessings with indulgent arms;
From her fair eyes what heavenly rays are spread,
What blooming joys smile round her blissful head!
Offspring divine! by thee we bless the CAUSE,
Who form'd the world, and rules it by his laws;
His independent being we adore,
Extol his goodness, and revere his power;
Our wondering eyes his high perfections view,
The lofty contemplation we pursue,
Till, ravish'd, we the great idea find,
Shining in bright impressions on our mind.
Inspir'd by thee, guest of celestial race!
With generous love, we humankind embrace;
We provocations unprovok'd receive,
Patient of wrong, and easy to forgive;
Protect the orphan, plead the widow's cause,
Nor deviate from the line unerring justice draws.
Thy lustre, bless'd effulgence! can dispel
The clouds of error, and the gloom of hell;
Can to the soul impart ethereal light,
Give life divine and intellectual sight;
Before our ravish'd eyes thy beams display
The opening scenes of bliss, and endless day;
By which incited, we with ardour rise,
Scorn this inferior ball, and claim the skies.
Tyrants to thee a change of nature owe,
Dismiss their tortures, and indulgent grow.

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Ambitious conquerors in their mad career,
Check'd by thy voice lay down the sword and spear.
The boldest champions of impiety,
Scornful of Heaven, subdued or won by thee,
Before thy hallow'd altars bend the knee;
Loose wits, made wise, a public good become,
The sons of pride an humble mien assume;
The profligate in morals grows severe,
Defrauders just, and sycophants sincere.
With amorous language, and bewitching smiles,
Attractive airs, and all the lover's wiles,
The fair Egyptian Jacob's son caress'd,
Hung on his neck, and languish'd on his breast;
Courted with freedom now the beauteous slave,
Now flattering sued, and threatening, now did rave;
But not the various eloquence of love,
Nor power enrag'd, could his fix'd virtue move.
See, aw'd by Heaven, the blooming Hebrew flies
Her artful tongue, and more persuasive eyes;
And, springing from her disappointed arms,
Prefers a dungeon to forbidden charms.
Stedfast in virtue's and his country's cause,
The' illustrious founder of the Jewish laws,
Who, taught by Heaven, at genuine greatness aim'd,
With worthy pride imperial blood disclaim'd;
The' alluring hopes of Pharaoh's throne resign'd,
And the vain pleasures of a court declin'd;
Pleas'd with obscure recess, to ease the pains
Of Jacob's race, and break their servile chains;
Such generous minds are form'd where bless'd religion reigns.
Ye friends of Epicurus, look around,
All nature view with marks of prudence crown'd:

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Mind the wise ends, which proper means promote;
See how the different parts for different use are wrought;
Contemplate all this conduct and design,
Then own and praise the' Artificer Divine.
Regard the orb sublime, in ether borne,
Which the blue regions of the skies adorn;
Compar'd with whose extent, this low-hung ball,
Shrunk to a point, is despicably small:
Their number, (counting those the' unaided eye
Can see, or by invented tubes descry,
With those which in the adverse hemisphere,
Or near each pole to lands remote appear;)
The widest stretch of human thought exceeds,
And in the' attentive mind amazement breeds;
While these so numerous, and so vast of size,
In various ways roll through the trackless skies;
Through crossing roads perplex'd and intricate,
Perform their stages, and their rounds repeat;
None by collision from their course are driven,
No shocks, no conflicts break the peace of Heaven;
No shatter'd globes, no glowing fragments fall,
No worlds o'erturn'd, crush this terrestrial ball;
In beauteous order all the orbs advance,
And in their mazy complicated dance,
Not in one part of all the pathless sky,
Did any ever halt, or step awry.
When twice ten thousand men, depriv'd of sight,
To some wide vale direct their footsteps right;
Shall there a various figur'd dance essay,
Move by just steps, and measur'd time obey;
Shall cross each other with unerring feet,
Never mistake their place, and never meet;

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Nor shall in many years the least decline
From the same ground, and the same winding line:
Then may in various roads the orbs above,
Without a guide, in perfect concord move;
Then beauty, order, and harmonious laws,
May not require a wise Directing Cause.
  See how the' indulgent father of the day
At such due distance does his beams display,
That he his heat may give to sea and land,
In just degrees, as all their wants demand!
But had he, in the' unmeasurable space
Of ether, chosen a remoter place;
For instance, pleas'd with that superior seat,
Where Saturn, or where Jove, their course repeat;
Or had he happen'd further yet to lie,
In the more distant quarters of the sky;
How sad, how wild, how exquisite a scene
Of desolation, had this planet been!
A wasteful, cold, untrodden wilderness,
The gloomy haunts of horror and distress:
Instead of woods, which crown the mountain's head,
And the gay honours of the verdant mead;
Instead of golden fruits, the garden's pride,
By genial showers and solar heat supplied;
Icelandian cold, and Hyperborean snows,
Eternal frost, with ice that never flows,
Unsufferable winter had defac'd
Earth's blooming charms, and made a barren waste:
No mild indulgent gales would gently bear,
On their soft wings, sweet vapours through the air
The balmy spoils of plants and fragrant flowers,
Of aromatic groves, and myrtle bowers,
Whose odoriferous exhalations fan
The flame of life, and recreate beast and man;

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But storms, ev'n worse than vex Norwegian waves,
That breed in Scythia's hills, or Lapland caves,
Would through this bleak terrestrial desert blow,
Glaze it with ice, or whelm it o'er with snow.
  Or had the sun, by like unhappy fate,
Elected to the earth a nearer seat,
His beams had cleft the hill, the valley dried,
Exhal'd the lake, and drain'd the briny tide:
A heat superior far to that which broils
Bornéo, or Sumatra, Indian isles;
Than that which ripens Guinea's golden ore,
Or burns the Lybian hind, or tans the Moor;
Had laid all nature waste, and turn'd the land
To hills of cinders, and to vales of sand;
No beasts could then have rang'd the leafless wood,
Nor finny nations cut the boiling flood:
Birds had not beat the airy road, the swains
No flocks had tended on the russet plains.
Thus, had the sun's bright orb been more remote,
The cold had kill'd; and, if more near, the drought.
  Next see, Lucretian sages, see the sun
His course diurnal and his annual run.
How in his glorious race he moves along,
Gay as a bridegroom, as a giant strong:
How his unvaried labour he repeats,
Returns at morning, and at eve retreats;
And by the distribution of his light,
Now gives to man the day, and now the night;
Night, when the drowsy swain and traveller cease
Their daily toil, and soothe their limbs with ease;
When all the weary sons of woe restrain
Their yielding cares with slumber's silken chain,
Solace sad grief, and lull reluctant pain.

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And while the sun, ne'er covetous of rest,
Flies with such rapid speed from east to west,
In tracks oblique he through the zodiac rolls,
Between the northern and the southern poles:
From which revolving progress through the skies,
The needful seasons of the year arise.
And as he now advances, now retreats,
Whence winter-colds proceed, and summer-heats,
He qualifies and cheers the air by turns,
Which winter freezes, and which summer burns.
Thus his kind rays the two extremes reduce,
And keep a temper fit for nature's use.
The frost and drought, by this alternate power,
The earth's prolific energy restore.
The lives of man and beast demand the change;
Hence fowls the air, and fish the ocean range.
Of heat and cold this just successive reign,
Which does the balance of the year maintain,
The gardener's hope and farmer's patience props,
Gives vernal verdure and autumnal crops.
Should but the sun his duty once forget,
Nor from the north, nor from the south retreat:
Should not the beams revive, and soothe the soil,
Mellow the furrow for the ploughman's toil;
A teeming vigour should they not diffuse,
Ferment the glebe, and genial spirits loose,
Which lay imprison'd in the stiffen'd ground,
Congeal'd with cold, in frosty fetters bound;
Unfruitful earth her wretched fate would mourn,
No grass would clothe the plains, no fruit the trees adorn.
But did the lingering orb much longer stay,
Unmindful of his course, and crooked way:
The earth, of dews defrauded, would detest
The fatal favour of the' effulgent guest;

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To distant worlds implore him to repair,
And free from noxious beams the sultry air;
His rays, productive now of wealth and joy,
Would then the pasture and the hills annoy,
And with too great indulgence would destroy:
In vain the labouring hind would till the land,
Turn up the glebe, and sow his seed in sand;
The meads would crack, in want of binding dews,
The channels would the' exhaling river lose:
While in their haunts wild beasts expiring lie,
The panting herds would on the pasture die.
But now the sun at neither tropic stays
A longer time than his alternate rays
In such proportion heat and lustre give,
As do not ruin nature, but revive.

When the bright orb, to solace southern seats,
Inverts his course, and from the north retreats;
As he advances, his indulgent beam
Makes the glad earth with fresh conceptions teem;
Restores their leafy honours to the woods,
Flowers to the banks, and freedom to the floods;
Unbinds the turf, exhilarates the plain,
Brings back his labour, and recruits the swain;
Through all the soil a genial ferment spreads,
Regenerates the plants, and new adorns the meads.
The birds on branches perch'd, or on the wing,
At nature's verdant restoration sing,
And with melodious lay salute the spring.

The heats of summer benefits produce
Of equal number, and of equal use:
The sprouting births, and beauteous vernal bloom,
By warmer rays to ripe perfection come;
The' austere and ponderous juices they sublime,
Make them ascend the porous soil, and climb
The orange-tree, the citron, and the lime;

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Which, drunk in plenty by the thirsty root,
Break forth in painted flowers, and golden fruit:
They explicate the leaves, and ripen food
For the silk-labourers of the mulberry wood;
And the sweet liquor on the cane bestow,
From which prepar'd the luscious sugars flow;
With generous juice enrich the spreading vine,
And in the grape digest the sprightly wine.
The fragrant trees, which grow by Indian floods,
And in Arabia's aromatic woods,
Owe all their spices to the summer's heat,
Their gummy tears, and odoriferous sweat.
Now the bright sun compacts the precious stone,
Imparting radiant lustre, like his own:
He tinctures rubies with their rosy hue,
And on the sapphire spreads a heavenly blue;
For the proud monarch's dazzling crown prepares
Rich orient pearl, and adamantine stars.

Next autumn, when the sun's withdrawing ray
The night enlarges, and contracts the day,
To crown his labour to the farmer, yields
The yellow treasures of his fruitful fields:
Ripens the harvest for the crooked steel,
(While bending stalks the rural weapon feel)
The fragrant fruit for the nice palate fits,
And to the press the swelling grape submits.

At length, forsaken by the solar rays,
See, drooping nature sickens and decays;
While winter all his snowy stores displays,
In hoary triumph unmolested reigns
O'er barren hills, and bleak untrodden plains;
Hardens the glebe, the shady grove deforms,
Fetters the floods, and shakes the air with storms.
Now active spirits are restrain'd with cold,
And prisons, cramp'd with ice, the genial captives hold.

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The meads their flowery pride no longer wear,
And trees extend their naked arms in air;
The frozen furrow, and the fallow field,
Nor to the spade, nor to the harrow, yield.
  Yet, in their turn, the snows and frosts produce
Various effects, and of important use.
The' intemperate heats of summer are controll'd
By winter's rigour, and inclement cold,
Which checks contagious spawn, and noxious steams,
The fatal offspring of immoderate beams;
The' exhausted air with vital nitre fills,
Infection stops, and death in embryo kills;
Constrains the glebe, keeps back the hurtful weed,
And fits the furrow for the vernal seed.
The spirits now, as said, imprison'd stay,
Which else, by warmer sun-beams drawn away,
Would roam in air, and dissipated stray.
Thus are the winter frosts to nature kind,
Frosts, which reduce excessive heats, and bind
Prolific ferments in resistless chains,
Whence parent earth her fruitfulness maintains.
To compass all these happy ends, the sun
In winding tracks does through the zodiac run.
  You, who so much are vers'd in causes, tell,
What from the tropics can the sun repel?
What vigorous arm, what repercussive blow,
Bandies the mighty globe still to and fro,
Yet with such conduct, such unerring art,
He never did the trackless road desert?
Why does he never in his spiral race
The tropics or the polar circles pass?
What gulfs, what mounds, what terrors can control
The rushing orb, and make him backward roll?
Why should he halt at either station? why
Not forward run in unobstructive sky?

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Can he not pass an astronomic line ?
Or does he dread the' imaginary sign;
That he should ne'er advance to either pole,
Nor further yet in liquid ether roll,
Till he has gain'd some unfrequented place
Lost to the world in vast unmeasur'd space ?
If to the old you the new schools prefer,
And to the fam'd Copernicus adhere;
If you esteem that supposition best,
Which moves the earth, and leaves the sun at rest;
With a new veil your ignorance you hide,
Still is the knot as hard to be untied;
You change your scheme, but the old doubts remain,
And still you leave the' inquiring mind in pain.
This problem, as philosophers, resolve:
What makes the globe from west to east revolve ?
What is the strong impulsive cause, declare,
Which rolls the ponderous orb so swift in air ?
To your vain answer will you have recourse,
And tell us, 'tis ingenite, active force,
Mobility, or native power to move:—
Words which mean nothing, and can nothing prove ?
That moving power, that force innate explain,
Or your grave answers are absurd and vain:
We no solution of our question find;
Your words bewilder, not direct the mind.
If you, this rapid motion to procure,
For the hard task employ magnetic power;
Whether that power you at the centre place,
Or in the middle regions of the mass,
Or else, as some philosophers assert,
You give an equal share to every part;
Have you by this the cause of motion shown ?
After explaining, is it not unknown ?

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Since you pretend, by reason's strictest laws,
Of an effect to manifest the cause;
Nature, of wonders so immense a field,
Can none more strange, none more mysterious yield,
None that eludes sagacious reason more
Than this obscure, inexplicable power.
Since you the spring of motion cannot show,
Be just, and faultless ignorance allow;
Say, 'tis obedience to the' Almighty nod,
That 'tis the will, the power, the hand of God!
Philosophers of spreading fame are found,
Who by the' attraction of the orbs around
Would move the earth, and make its course obey
The sun's and moon's inevitable sway.
Some, from the pressure and impelling force
Of heavenly bodies, would derive its course;
Whilst in the dark and difficult dispute
All are by turns confuted and confute;
Each can subvert the' opponent's scheme, but none
Has strength of reason to support his own.

The mind employ'd in search of secret things,
To find out motion's cause and hidden springs,
Through all the' ethereal regions mounts on high,
Views all the spheres, and ranges all the sky;
Searches the orbs, and penetrates the air
With unsuccessful toil, and fruitless care;
Till, stop'd by awful heights, and gulfs immense
Of wisdom, and of vast omnipotence,
She trembling stands, and does in wonder gaze,
Lost in the wide inextricable maze.

See, how the sun does on the middle shine,
And round the globe describe the' equator line:
By which wise means he can the whole survey
With a direct, or with a slanting ray,
In the succession of a night and day.

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Had the north-pole been fix'd beneath the sun,
To southern realms the day had been unknown:
If the south pole had gain'd that nearer seat,
The northern climes had met as hard a fate,
And since the space, that lies on either side
The solar orb, is without limits wide;
Grant that the sun had happen'd to prefer
A seat ascant but one diameter,
Lost to the light by that unhappy place
This globe had lain a frozen, lonesome mass.
  Behold the light emitted from the sun,
What more familiar, and what more unknown!
While by its spreading radiance it reveals
All nature's face, it still itself conceals.
See how each morn it does its beams display,
And on its golden wings bring back the day!
How soon the' effulgent emanations fly
Through the blue gulf of interposing sky!
How soon their lustre all the region fills,
Smiles on the vallies and adorns the hills!
Millions of miles, so rapid is their race,
To cheer the earth, they in few moments pass.
Amazing progress! At its utmost stretch,
What human mind can this swift motion reach?
But if, to save so quick a flight, you say
The ever-rolling orb's impulsive ray
On the next threads and filaments does bear,
Which from the springy texture of the air,
That those still strike the next' till to the sight
The quick vibration propagates the light!
'Tis still as hard, if we this scheme believe,
The cause of light's swift progress to conceive.
  With thought, from prepossession free, reflect
On solar rays, as they the sight respect.

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The beams of light had been in vain display'd,
Had not the eye been fit for vision made:
In vain the author had the eye prepar'd
With so much skill, had not the light appear'd.
The old and new astronomers in vain
Attempt the heavenly motions to explain.
First, Ptolemy his scheme celestial wrought,
And of machines a wild provision brought:
Orbs centric and eccentric he prepares,
Cycles and epicycles, solid spheres,
In order plac'd, and with bright globes inlaid,
To solve the tours by heavenly bodies made.
But so perplex'd, so intricate a frame,
The latter ages with derision name.
The comets, which at seasons downward tend,
Then with their flaming equipage ascend;
Venus, which in the purlieus of the sun
Does now above him, now beneath him run;
The ancient structure of the heavens subvert,
Rear'd with vast labour, but with little art.
Copernicus, who rightly did condemn
This eldest system, form'd a wiser scheme;
In which he leaves the sun at rest, and rolls
The orb terrestrial on its proper poles:
Which makes the night and day by this career,
And by its slow and crooked course the year.
The famous Dane*, who oft the modern guides,
To earth and sun their provinces divides:
The earth's rotation makes the night and day;
The sun revolving through the ecliptic way
Effects the various seasons of the year,
Which in their turn for happy ends appear.

* Tycho Brahe.

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This scheme or that, which pleases best, embrace,
Still we the fountain of their motion trace.
Kepler asserts these wonders may be done
By the magnetic virtue of the sun,
Which he, to gain his end, thinks fit to place
Full in the centre of that mighty space,
Which does the spheres, where planets roll, include,
And leaves him with attractive force endued.
The sun, thus seated, by mechanic laws,
The earth and every distant planet draws;
By which attraction all the planets, found
Within his reach, are turn'd in ether round.
If all these rolling orbs the sun obey,
Who holds his empire by magnetic sway;
Since all are guided with an equal force,
Why are they so unequal in their course?
Saturn in thirty years his ring completes,
Which swifter Jupiter in twelve repeats.
Mars three and twenty months revolving spends;
The earth in twelve her annual journey ends.
Venus, thy race in twice four months is run;
For his, Mercurius three demands; the moon
Her revolution finishes in one.
If all at once are mov'd, and by one spring,
Why so unequal is their annual ring?
If some, you say, press'd with a ponderous load
Of gravity, move slower in their road,
Because, with weight encumber'd and oppress'd,
These sluggish orbs the' attractive sun resist;
Till you can weight and gravity explain,
Those words are insignificant and vain.
If planetary orbs the sun obey,
Why should the moon disown his sovereign sway?

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Why in a whirling eddy of her own
Around the globe terrestrial should she run?
This disobedience of the moon will prove
The sun's bright orb does not the planet move.
Philosophers may spare their toil; in vain
They form new schemes, and rack their thoughtful brain,
The cause of heavenly motions to explain:
After their various unsuccessful ways,
Their fruitless labour, and inept essays,
No cause of those appearances they'll find,
But power exerted by the' Eternal Mind:
Which through their roads the orbs celestial drives,
And this or that determin'd motion gives.
The Mind Supreme does all his worlds control,
Which by his order this and that way roll;
From him they take a delegated force,
And by his high command maintain their course;
By laws decreed ere fleeting time begun,
In their fix'd limits they their stages run.
But if the earth, and each erratic world,
Around their sun (their proper centre) whirl'd,
Compose but one extended vast machine,
And from one spring their motions all begin;
Does not so wide, so intricate a frame,
Yet so harmonious, sovereign art proclaim?
Is it a proof of judgment to invent
A work of spheres involv'd, which represent
The situation of the orbs above,
Their size and number show, and how they move?
And does not in the orbs themselves appear
A great contrivance, and design as clear?
This wide machine, the universe, regard,
With how much skill is each apartment rear'd!

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The sun, a globe of fire, a glowing mass,
Hotter than melting flint, or fluid glass,
Of this our system holds the middle place.
Mercurius, nearest to the central sun,
Does in an oval orbit circling run;
But rarely is the object of our sight
In solar glory sunk, and more prevailing light.
Venus the next, whose lovely beams adorn
As well the dewy eve, as opening morn,
Does her fair orb in beauteous order turn.
The globe terrestrial next, with slanting poles,
And all its ponderous load, unwearied rolls.
Then we behold bright planetary Jove
Sublime in air through his wide province move;
Four second planets his dominion own,
And round him turn, as round the earth the moon.
Saturn, revolving in the highest sphere,
With lingering labour finishes his year.
Yet is this mighty system, which contains
So many worlds, such vast ethereal plains,
But one of thousands, which compose the whole,
Perhaps as glorious, and of worlds as full.
The stars, which grace the high expansion, bright
By their own beams, and unprecarious light,
Though some near neighbours seem, and some dis-
United lustre in the milky way, [play
At a vast distance from each other lie,
Sever'd by spacious voids of liquid sky.
All these illustrious worlds, and many more,
Which by the tube astronomers explore;
And millions which the glass can ne'er descry,
Lost in the wilds of vast immensity;
Are suns, are centres, whose superior sway
Planets of various magnitude obey.

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If we with one clear comprehensive sight
Saw all these systems, all these orbs of light;
If we their order and dependence knew,
Had all their motions and their ends in view,
With all the comets which in ether stray,
Yet constant to their time and to their way;
Which planets seem, though rarely they appear,
Rarely approach the radiant sun so near,
That his fair beams their atmosphere pervade,
Whence their bright hair and flaming trains are made;
Would not this view convincing marks impart
Of perfect prudence, and stupendous art?
The masters form'd in Newton's famous school,
Who does the chief in modern science rule,
Erect their schemes by mathematic laws,
And solve appearances with just applause:
These, who have nature's steps with care pursued,
That matter is with active force endued,
That all its parts magnetic power exert,
And to each other gravitate, assert.
While by this power they on each other act,
They are at once attracted, and attract.
Less bulky matter therefore must obey
More bulky matter's more engaging sway;
By this the fabric they together hold,
By this the course of heavenly orbs unfold.
Yet these sagacious sons of science own
Attractive virtue is a thing unknown.
This wondrous power, they piously assert,
The' Almighty Author did at first impart
To matter in degrees, that might produce
The motions he design'd for nature's use.
But, lest we should not here due reverence pay
To learned Epicurus, see the way

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By which this reasoner, of such high renown,
Moves through the' ecliptic road the rolling sun.
Oppress'd with thirst and heat, to adverse seats
By turns, says he, the panting sun retreats,
To slake his drought, his vigour to repair
In snowy climes, and frozen fields of air;
Where the bright glutton revels without rest
On his cool banquet, and aërial feast;
Still to and fro he does his light convey
Through the same track, the same unalter'd way,
On luxury intent, and eager of his prey.

But if the sun is back and forward roll'd,
To treat his thirsty orb with polar cold,
Say, is it not, good Epicurus, strange,
He should not once beyond the tropic range,
Where he, to quench his drought so much inclin'd,
May snowy fields, and nitrous pastures find,
Meet stores of cold so greedily pursued,
And be refresh'd with never-wasting food?

Sometimes this wondrous man is pleas'd to say,
This way and that, strong blasts the sun convey:
A northern wind his orb with vigour drives,
Till at the southern tropic it arrives;
Then, wanting breath, and with his toil oppress'd,
He drops his wings, and leaves the air at rest;
Fresh gusts, now springing from the southern pole,
Assault him there, and make him backward roll.
Thus gales alternate through the zodiac blow
The sailing orb, and waft him to and fro;
While Epicurus, bless'd with thought refin'd,
Makes the vast globe the pastime of the wind.

Were it not idle labour to confute
Notions so wild, unworthy of dispute,

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I'd of the learned Epicurus ask,
If this were for the winds a proper task?
Illustrious sage, inform the' inquirer, why
Still from one stated point of all the sky
The fickle meteor should the sun convey
Through the same stages of his spiral way!
Why in one path, why with such equal pace,
That he should never miss in all his race,
Of time one minute, or one inch of space?

Remark the air's transparent element,
Its curious structure, and its vast extent:
Its wondrous web proclaims the loom divine;
Its threads, the hand that drew them out so fine.
This thin contexture makes its bosom fit
Celestial heat and lustre to transmit;
By which of foreign orbs the riches flow
On this dependent needy ball below.

Observe its parts link'd in such artful sort,
All are at once supported, and support:
The column pois'd sits hovering on our heads,
And a soft burden on our shoulders spreads;
So the side-arches all the weight sustain,
We find no pressure, and we feel no pain;
Still are the subtile strings in tension found,
Like those of lutes to just proportion wound,
Which of the air's vibration is the source,
When it receives the strokes of foreign force.

Let curious minds, who would the air inspect,
On its elastic energy reflect.
The secret force through all the frame diffus'd,
By which its strings are from compression loos'd;
The spungy parts now to a straiter seat
Are forc'd by cold, and widen'd now by heat;

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By turns they all extend, by turns retire,
As nature's various services require;
They now expand to fill an empty space,
Now shrink to let a ponderous body pass.
If raging winds invade the atmosphere,
Their force its curious texture cannot tear,
Make no disruption in the threads of air;
Or if it does, those parts themselves restore,
Heal their own wounds, and their own breaches cure.
Hence the melodious tenants of the sky,
Which haunt inferior seats, or soar on high,
With ease through all the fluid region stray,
And through the wide expansion wing their way;
Whose open meshes let terrestrial steams
Pass through, entic'd away by solar beams;
And thus a road reciprocal display
To rising vapours, and descending day.
  Of heat and light, what ever-during stores,
Brought from the sun's exhaustless golden shores,
Through gulfs immense of intervening air,
Enrich the earth, and every loss repair!
The land, its gainful traffic to maintain,
Sends out crude vapours, in exchange for rain;
The flowery garden, and the verdant mead,
Warn'd by their rays, their exhalations spread,
In showers and balmy dews to be repaid;
The streams, their banks forsaken, upward move,
And flow again in wandering clouds above:
These regions, Nature's magazines on high,
With all the stores demanded there supply;
Their different steams the air's wide bosom fill,
Moist from the flood, dry from the barren hill;
Materials into meteors to be wrought,
Which back to these terrestrial seats are brought,

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By Nature shap'd to various figures, those
The fruitful rain, and these the hail compose,
The snowy fleece, and curious frost-work; these
Produce the dew, and those the gentle breeze:
Some form fierce winds, which o'er the mountain
And beat with vigorous wings the valley's face; [pass,
O'er the wide lake and barren desert blow,
O'er Libya's burning sand, and Scythia's snow;
Shake the high cedar, through the forest sweep,
And with their furious breath ferment the deep.

This thin, this soft contexture of the air
Shows the wise Author's providential care,
Who did the wondrous structure so contrive,
That it might life to breathing creatures give;
Might reinspire, and make the circling mass
Through all its winding channels fit to pass.
Had not the Maker wrought the springy frame
Such as it is, to fan the vital flame,
The blood, defrauded of its nitrous food,
Had cool'd and languish'd in the' arterial road:
While the tir'd heart had strove with fruitless pain
To push the lazy tide along the vein.

Of what important use to humankind,
To what great ends subservient, is the wind!
Behold, where'er this active vapour flies,
It drives the clouds, and agitates the skies:
This from stagnation and corruption saves
The' aërial ocean's ever-rolling waves.
This animals, to succour life, demand;
For, should the air unventilated stand,
The idle deep, corrupted, would contain
Blue deaths, and secret stores of raging pain;
The scorching sun would with a fatal beam
Make all the void with births malignant teem,

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Engender jaundice, spotted torments breed,
And purple plagues, from pestilential seed;
Exhaling vapours would be turn'd to swarms
Of noxious insects, and destructive worms,
More than were rais'd to scourge tyrannic lust,
By Moses' rod, from animated dust.
Another blessing, which the breathing wind
Benevolent conveys to humankind,
Is, that it cools and qualifies the air,
And with soft breezes does the regions cheer,
On which the sun o'er-friendly does display
Heat too prevailing, and redundant day.
Ye swarthy nations of the torrid zone,
How well to you is this great bounty known!
As frequent gales from the wide ocean rise
To fan your air, and moderate your skies;
So constant winds, as well as rivers, flow
From your high hills enrich'd with stores of snow;
For this great end, these hills rise more sublime
Than those erected in a temperate clime.
Had not the Author this provision made,
By which your air is cool'd, your sun allay'd;
Destroy'd by too intense a flame, the land
Had lain a parch'd inhospitable sand.
These districts, which between the tropics lie,
Which scorching beams directly darted fry,
Were thought an uninhabitable seat,
Burnt by the neighbouring orb's immoderate heat.
But the fresh breeze, that from the ocean blows,
From the wide lake, or from the mountain snows,
So soothes the air, and mitigates the sun,
So cures the regions of the sultry zone,
That oft with Nature's blessings they abound,
Frequent in people, and with plenty crown'd

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As active winds relieve the air and land,
The seas no less their useful blasts demand:
Without this aid, the ship would ne'er advance
Along the deep, and o'er the billow dance,
But lie a lazy and a useless load,
The forest's wasted spoils, the lumber of the flood.
Let but the wind with an auspicious gale,
To shove the vessel, fill the spreading sail,
And see, with swelling canvass wing'd, she flies,
And with her waving streamers sweeps the skies!
The' adventurous merchant thus pursues his way,
Or to the rise, or to the fall of day.
Thus mutual traffic sever'd realms maintain,
And manufactures change to mutual gain;
Each other's growth and arts they sell and buy,
Ease their redundance, and their wants supply.
Ye Britons, who the fruit of commerce find,
How is your isle a debtor to the wind,
Which thither wafts Arabia's fragrant spoils,
Gems, pearls, and spices, from the Indian isles,
From Persia silks, wines from Iberia's shore,
Peruvian drugs, and Guinea's golden ore!
Delights and wealth to fair Augusta flow
From every region whence the winds can blow.
See, how the vapours congregated rear
Their gloomy columns, and obscure the air!
Forgetful of their gravity, they rise,
Renounce the centre, and usurp the skies,
Where, form'd to clouds, they their black lines display,
And take their airy march, as winds convey.
Sublime in air while they their course pursue.
They from their sable fleeces shake the dew
On the parch'd mountain, and with genial rain
Renew the forest, and refresh the plain:

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They shed their healing juices on the ground,
Cement the crack, and close the gaping wound.
Did not the vapours, by the solar heat
Thin'd and exhal'd, rise to their airy seat,
Or not in watery clouds collected fly,
Then form'd to ponderous drops desert the sky;
The fields would no recruits of moisture find,
But, by the sun-beams dried, and by the wind,
Would never plant, or flower, or fruit, produce,
Or for the beast, or for his master's use.

But in the spacious climates, which the rain
Does never bless, (such is the' Egyptian plain)
With how much art is that defect supplied!
See, how some noble river's swelling tide,
Augmented by the mountains' melting snows,
Breaks from its banks, and o'er the region flows!
Hence fruitful crops and flowery wealth ensue,
And to the swain such mighty gains accrue,
He ne'er reproaches Heaven for want of dew.

See, and revere, the artillery of Heaven,
Drawn by the gale, or by the tempest driven!
A dreadful fire the floating batteries make,
O'erturn the mountain, and the forest shake.
This way and that, they drive the atmosphere,
And its wide bosom from corruption clear,
While their bright flame consumes the sulphur trains
And noxious vapours, which infect our veins.
Thus they refine the vital element,
Secure our health, and growing plagues prevent.

Your contemplation further yet pursue;
The wondrous world of vegetables view!
Observe the forest oak, the mountain pine,
The towering cedar, and the humble vine,

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The bending willow, that o'ershades the flood,
And each spontaneous offspring of the wood!
The oak and pine, which high from earth arise,
And wave their lofty heads amidst the skies,
Their parent earth in like proportion wound,
And through crude metals penetrate the ground;
Their strong and ample roots descend so deep
That fix'd and firm they may their station keep,
And the fierce shocks of furious winds defy,
With all the outrage of inclement sky.
But the base brier and the noble vine
Their arms around their stronger neighbour twine.
The creeping ivy, to prevent its fall,
Clings with its fibrous grapples to the wall.
Thus are the trees of every kind secure,
Or by their own, or by a borrow'd power.
But every tree from all its branching roots
Amidst the glebe small hollow fibres shoots;
Which drink with thirsty mouths the vital juice,
And to the limbs and leaves their food diffuse:
Peculiar pores peculiar juice receive,
To this deny, to that admittance give.

Hence, various trees their various fruits produce,
Some for delightful taste, and some for use.
Hence, sprouting plants enrich the plain and wood,
For physic some, and some design'd for food.
Hence, fragrant flowers, with different colours dy'd,
On smiling meads unfold their gaudy pride.

Review these numerous scenes, at once survey
Nature's extended face; then, sceptics, say,
In this wide field of wonders can you find
No art discover'd, and no end design'd;

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BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

The introduction. Useful knowledge first pursued by man. Agriculture. Architecture. Sculpture. Painting. Music. The Grecian philosophers first engaged in useless speculations. The absurdity of asserting the self-existent, independent, and eternal being of atoms, according to the scheme of Epicurus. Answer to the objections of atheists to the scheme of Creation asserted in the two former books. The objections brought by Lucretius against Creation, from the necessity of pre-existent matter for the formation of all kinds of beings; from the pretended unartful contrivance of the world; from thorns, briers, and noxious weeds; from savage beasts, storms, thunder, diseases; from the painful birth and the short life of man; from the inequality of heat and cold in different climates; answered. The objections of the Pyrrhonians, or Sceptics, answered. A reply to those who assert all things owe their being and their motions to nature. Their different and senseless account of that word. More apparent and eminent skill and wisdom expressed in the works of nature than in those of human art. The unreasonableness of denying skill and design in the author of those works. Vaninus, Hobbes and Spinosa, considered.

Ere vain Philosophy had rear'd her school,
Whose chiefs imagin'd realms of science rule,
With idle toil form visionary schemes,
And wage eternal war for rival dreams;
Studious of good, man disregarded fame,
And useful knowledge was his eldest aim:

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Through metaphysic wilds he never flew,
Nor the dark haunts of school-chimeras knew,
But had alone his happiness in view.

He milk'd the lowing herd, he press'd the cheese,
Folded the flock, and spun the woolly fleece.
In urns the bee's delicious dews he laid,
Whose kindling wax invented day display'd;
Wrested their iron entrails from the hills,
Then with the spoils his growing forges fills;
And shap'd with vigorous strokes the ruddy bar
To rural arms, unconscious yet of war.
He made the ploughshare in the furrow shine,
And learn'd to sow his bread, and plant his vine.
Now verdant food adorn'd the garden beds,
And fruitful trees shot up their branching heads;
Rich balm from groves, and herbs from grassy plains,
His fever sooth'd, or heal'd his wounded veins.

Our fathers next, in architecture skill'd,
Cities for use, and forts for safety build:
Then palaces and lofty domes arose,
These for devotion, and for pleasure those.
Their thoughts were next to artful sculpture turn'd,
Which now the palace, now the dome adorn'd,
The pencil then did growing fame acquire,
Then was the trumpet heard, and tuneful lyre,
One did the triumph sing, and one the war inspire.

Greece did at length a learned race produce,
Who needful science mock'd, and arts of use,
Consum'd their fruitless hours in eager chase
Of airy notions, through the boundless space
Of speculation, and the darksome void
Where wrangling wits, in endless strife employ'd,
Mankind with idle subtilties embroil,
And fashion systems with romantic toil;

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These, with the pride of dogmatizing schools,
Impos'd on Nature arbitrary rules;
Forc'd her their vain inventions to obey,
And move as learned frenzy trac'd the way:
Above the clouds while they presum'd to soar,
Her trackless heights ambitious to explore,
And heaps of undigested volumes writ,
Illusive notions of fantastic wit:
So long they Nature search'd, and mark'd her laws,
They lost the knowledge of the' Almighty cause.
The' erroneous dictates of each Grecian sage
Renounc'd the doctrines of the eldest age;
Yet these their matchless science did proclaim,
Usurp distinction, and appropriate fame.
But though their schools produc'd no nobler fruit
Than empty schemes, and triumphs of dispute;
The notions which arise from Nature's light
As well adorn the mind as guide her right,
Enlarge her compass and improve her sight.
These ne'er the breast with vain ambition fire,
But banish pride, and modest thoughts inspire.
By her inform'd, we bless'd religion learn,
Its glorious object by her aid discern;
The rolling worlds around us we survey,
The' alternate sovereigns of the night and day;
View the wide earth adorn'd with hills and woods,
Rich in her herds, and fertile by her floods;
Walk through the deep apartments of the main,
Ascend the air to visit clouds and rain;
And, while we ravish'd gaze on Nature's face,
Remark her order, and her motions trace,
The long coherent chain of things we find
Leads to a Cause Supreme, a wise Creating Mind.

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You, who the being of a God disclaim,
And think mere chance produc'd this wondrous frame;
Say, did you ere reflect Lucretian tribe,
To matter what perfections you ascribe?
Can you to dust such veneration show?
An atom with such privilege endow,
That from its nature's pure necessity
It should exist, and no corruption see?
Since your first atoms independent are,
And not each other's being prop and bear,
And since to this it is fortuitous
That others should existence have: suppose
You in your mind one atom should remove
From all the troops, that in the vacant strove,
Cannot our thought conceive one atom less?
If so, you Grecian sages must confess
That matter, which you independent name,
Cannot a being necessary claim;
For what has being from necessity,
It is impossible it should not be.
Why has an atom this one place possess'd
Of all the empty void, and not the rest?
If by its nature's force 'tis present here,
By the same force it must be every where;
Can beings be confin'd, which necessary are?
If a first body may to any place
Be not determin'd, in the boundless space,
'Tis plain, it then may absent be from all;
Who then will this a self-existence call?
As time does vast eternity regard,
So place is with infinitude compar'd:
A being then, which never did commence,
Must, as eternal, likewise be immense.

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What cause within, or what without, is found,
That can a being uncreated bound?
None that's internal, for it has no cause;
Nor can it be controll'd by foreign laws,
For then it clearly would dependent be
On force superior, which will ne'er agree
With self-existence and necessity.
Absurdly then to atoms you assign
Such powers, and such prerogatives divine.
Thus while the notion of a God you slight,
Yourselves (who vainly think you reason right)
Make vile material gods, in number infinite.
Now let us, as 'tis just, in turn prepare
To stand the foe, and wage defensive war.
Lucretius first, a mighty hero, springs
Into the field, and his own triumph sings.
He brings, to make us from our ground retire,
The reasoner's weapons, and the poet's fire.
The tuneful sophist thus his battle forms,
Our bulwarks thus in polish'd armour storms:
'To parent matter things their being owe,
Because from nothing no productions flow;
And, if we grant no pre-existent seed, [breed,
Things, different things, from what they do, might
And any thing from any thing proceed;
The spicy groves might Scythia's hills adorn,
The thistle might the amaranth have borne,
The vine the lemon, and the grape the thorn;
Herds from the hills, men from the seas might rise,
From woods the whales, and lions from the skies.'
The' elated bard here, with a conqueror's air,
Disdainful smiles, and bids his foes despair.
But, Carus, here you use poetic charms,
And not assail us with the reasoner's arms.

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Where all is clear your fancied doubts remove,
And what we grant with ease, with labour prove.
What you would prove, but cannot, you decline;
But choose a thing you can, and there you shine.
Tell us, fam'd Roman, was it e'er denied,
That seeds for such productions are supplied?
That Nature always must materials find
For beasts and trees, to propagate their kind?
All generation, the rude peasant knows,
A pre-existent matter must suppose.
But what to Nature first her being gave?
Tell, whence your atoms their existence have!
We ask you, whence the seeds constituent spring
Of every plant, and every living thing?
Whence every creature should produce its kind,
And to its proper species be confin'd?
To answer this, Lucretius, will require
More than sweet numbers and poetic fire.
But see how well the poet will support
His cause, if we the argument retort.
If chance alone could manage, sort, divide,
And, beings to produce, your atoms guide;
If casual concourse did the world compose,
And things from hits fortuitous arose;
Then any thing might come from any thing;
For how from chance can constant order spring?
The forest oak might bear the blushing rose,
And fragrant myrtles thrive in Russian snows;
The fair promegranate might adorn the pine,
The grape the bramble, and the sloe the vine;
Fish from the plains, birds from the floods might rise,
And lowing herds break from the starry skies.
But, see, the chief does keener weapons choose,
Advances bold, and thus the fight renews:

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'If I were doubtful of the source and spring
Whence things arise, I from the skies could bring,
And every part of nature, proofs, to show
The world to gods cannot its being owe;
So full of faults is all the' unartful frame:—
First we the air's unpeopled desert blame.
Brute beasts possess the hill, and shady wood;
Much do the lakes, but more the ocean's flood,
(Which severs realms, and shores divided leaves)
Take from the land by interposing waves;
One-third, by freezing cold and burning heat,
Lies a deform'd, inhospitable seat;
The rest, unlabour'd, would by nature breed
Wild brambles only, and the noxious weed,
Did not industrious man, with endless toil,
Extort his food from the reluctant soil;
Did not the farmer's steel the furrow wound,
And harrows tear the harvest from the ground,
The earth would no spontaneous fruits afford
To man, her vain imaginary lord.
Oft when the labouring hind has plough'd the field,
And forc'd the glebe unwillingly to yield,
When green and flowery nature crowns his hope
With the gay promise of a plenteous crop,
The fruits (sad ruin!) perish on the ground,
Burnt by the sun, or by the deluge drown'd;
Or soon decay, by snows immoderate chill'd,
By winds are blasted, or by lightning kill'd.
Nature, besides, the savage beast sustains,
Breeds in the hills the terror of the plains,
To man a fatal race. Could this be so,
Did gracious gods dispose of things below?
Their proper plagues with annual seasons come,
And deaths untimely blast us in the bloom.

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Man at his birth (unhappy son of grief!)
Is helpless cast on the wide coasts of life,
In want of all things whence our comforts flow;
A sad and moving spectacle of woe.
Infants in ill-presaging cries complain,
As conscious of a coming life of pain.
All things, meantime, to beasts kind nature grants,
Prevents their sufferings, and supplies their wants;
Brought forth with ease, they grow, and skip, and feed,
No dangling nurse, or jingling gewgaw, need;
In caves they lurk, or o'er the mountains range,
Nor ever through the year their garment change;
Unvers'd in arms, and ignorant of war,
They need no forts, and no invasion fear;
Whate'er they want, from Nature's hand they gain;
The life she gave, she watches to maintain.'
  Thus impotent in sense, though strong in rage,
The daring Roman does the gods engage:
But undismay'd we face the' intrepid foe,
Sustain his onset, and thus ward the blow.
  Suppose defects in this terrestrial seat,
That nature is not, as you urge, complete;
That a divine and wise Artificer
Might greater wonders of his art confer,
And might with ease on man, and man's abode,
More bounty, more perfection, have bestow'd;
If in this lower world he has not shown
His utmost skill, say, has he therefore none?
We in productions arbitrary see
Marks of perfection, different in degree.
Though masters now more skill, now less impart,
Yet are not all their works the works of art?

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Do poets still sublimer subjects sing,
Still stretch to Heaven a bold aspiring wing,
Nor e'er descend to flocks and labouring swains,
Frequent the floods, or range the humble plains?
Did, Grecian Phidias, all thy pieces shine
With equal beauty? or, Apelles, thine?
Or Raphael's pencil never choose to fall?
Say, are his works transfigurations all?
Did Buonorota never build, O Rome,
A meaner structure than thy wondrous dome?
Though, in their works applauded as their best,
Greater design and genius are express'd,
Yet is there none acknowledg'd in the rest?

In all the parts of Nature's spacious sphere
Of art, ten thousand miracles appear:
And will you not the Author's skill adore,
Because you think he might discover more?
You own a watch the' invention of the mind,
Though for a single motion 'tis design'd,
As well as that, which is with greater thought,
With various springs, for various motions wrought.

An independent, wise, and conscious cause,
Who freely acts by arbitrary laws,
Who at connexion and at order aims,
Creatures distinguish'd in perfection frames.
Unconscious causes only still impart
Their utmost skill, their utmost power exert.
Those, which can freely choose, discern and know,
In acting, can degrees of vigour show,
And more or less of art or care bestow.
If all perfection were in all things shown,
All beauty, all variety, were gone.

As this inferior habitable seat
By different parts is made one whole complete;

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So our low world is only one of those
Which the capacious universe compose.
Now to the universal whole advert;
The earth regard as of that whole a part,
In which wide frame more noble worlds abound;
Witness, ye glorious orbs, which hang around,
Ye shining planets, that in ether stray,
And thou, bright lord and ruler of the day!
Witness, ye stars, which beautify the skies,
How much do your vast globes in height and size,
In beauty and magnificence outgo
Our ball of earth, that hangs in clouds below!
Between yourselves too is distinction found,
Of different bulk, with different glory crown'd;
The people, which in your bright regions dwell,
Must this low world's inhabitants excel;
And, since to various planets they agree,
They from each other must distinguish'd be,
And own perfections different in degree.

When we on fruitful Nature's care reflect,
And her exhaustless energy respect,
That stocks this globe, which you Lucretians call
The world's coarse dregs, which to the bottom fall,
With numerous kinds of life, and bounteous fills
With breathing guests the vallies, floods, and hills;
We may pronounce each orb sustains a race
Of living things adapted to the place.
Were the refulgent parts and most refin'd
Only to serve the dark and base design'd?
Were all the stars, those beauteous realms of light,
At distance only hung to shine by night,
And with their twinkling beams to please our sight?
How many roll in ether, which the eye
Could ne'er, till aided by the glass, descry;

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And which no commerce with the earth maintain!
Are all those glorious empires made in vain?
Now, as I said, the globe terrestrial view,
As of the whole a part, a mean one too.
Though 'tis not like the' ethereal worlds refin'd,
Yet is it just, and finish'd in its kind;
Has all perfection which the place demands,
Where in coherence with the rest it stands.
Were to your view the universe display'd,
And all the scenes of nature open laid;
Could you their place, proportion, harmony,
Their beauty, order, and dependence, see;
You'd grant our globe had all the marks of art,
All the perfection due to such a part,
Though not with lustre, or with magnitude,
Like the bright stars, or brighter sun, endued.
You oft declaim on man's unhappy fate;
Insulting, oft demand in this debate,
If the kind gods could such a wretch create?
But whence can this unhappiness arise?
You say, as soon as born, he helpless lies,
And mourns his woes in ill-presaging cries.
But does not Nature for the child prepare
The parent's love, the nurse's tender care,
Who, of their own forgetful, seek his good,
Enfold his limbs in bands, and fill his veins with food?
That man is frail and mortal, is confess'd,
Convulsions rack his nerves, and cares his breast;
His flying life is chas'd by ravening pains,
Through all its doubles in the winding veins;
Within himself he sure destruction breeds,
And secret torment in his bowels feeds;
By cruel tyrants, by the savage beast,
Or his own fiercer passions, he's oppress'd;

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Now breathes malignant air, now poison drinks;
By gradual death, or by untimely, sinks.
But these objectors must the cause upbraid
That has not mortal man immortal made;
For, if he once must feel the fatal blow,
Is it of great importance when, or how?
Should the Lucretian lingering life maintain
Through numerous ages, ignorant of pain,
Still might the discontented murmurer cry, [to die!'
'Ah, hapless fate of man! ah, wretch, doom'd once
But, oh! how soon would you, who thus complain,
And Nature's cause of cruelty arraign,
By reason's standard this mistake correct,
And cease to murmur, did you once reflect,
That death removes us only from our seat,
Does not extinguish life, but change its state.
Then are display'd (oh, ravishing surprise!)
Fair scenes of bliss, and triumphs in the skies;
To which admitted, each superior mind,
By virtue's vital energy refin'd,
Shines forth with more than solar glory bright,
And, cloth'd with robes of beatific light,
His hours in heavenly transports does employ, [joy.
Young with immortal bloom from living streams of
You ask us, 'Why the soil the thistle breeds?
Why its spontaneous births are thorns and weeds?
Why for the harvest it the harrow needs?
The Author might a nobler world have made,
In brighter dress the hills and vales array'd,
And all its face in flowery scenes display'd:
The glebe untill'd might plenteous crops have borne,
And brought forth spicy groves instead of thorn;
Rich fruit and flowers, without the gardener's pains,
Might every hill have crown'd, have honour'd all
the plains:

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This nature might have boasted, had the mind
Who form'd the spacious universe, design'd
That man, from labour free as well as grief,
Should pass in lazy luxury his life,
But he his creature gave a fertile soil,
Fertile, but not without the owner's toil;
That some reward his industry should crown,
And that his food in part might be his own.
  But while, insulting, you arraign the land,
Ask why it wants the plough, or labourer's hand;
Kind to the marble rocks, you ne'er complain
That they without the sculptor's skill and pain
No perfect statute yield, no *basse relieve*,
Or finish'd column for the palace give;
Yet if from hills unlabour'd figures came,
Man might have ease enjoy'd, though never fame.
  You may the world of more defects upbraid,
That other works by nature are unmade;
That she did never at her own expense
A palace rear, and in magnificence
Out-rival art, to grace the stately rooms;
That she no castle builds, no lofty domes.
Had nature's hand these various works prepar'd,
What thoughtful care, what labour had been spar'd!
But then no realm would one great master show,
No Phidias Greece, and Rome no Angelo.
With equal reason too you might demand,
Why boats and ships require the artist's hand?
Why generous nature did not these provide
To pass the standing lake, or flowing tide?
  You say the hills, which high in air arise,
Harbour in clouds, and mingle with the skies,
The earth's dishonour and encumbering load,
Of many spacious regions man defraud,
For beasts and birds of prey a desolate abode.

Google

But can the' objector no convenience find [bind
In mountains, hills, and rocks, which gird and
The mighty frame that else would be disjoin'd?
Do not those heaps the raging tide restrain,
And for the dome afford the marble vein?
Does not the river from the mountain flow,
And bring down riches to the vale below?
See how the torrent rolls the golden sand
From the high ridges to the flatter land.
The lofty lines abound with endless store
Of mineral treasure, and metallic ore;
With precious veins of silver, copper, tin,
Without how barren, yet how rich within!
They bear the pine, the oak and cedar yield,
To form the palace, and the navy build.
When the inclement meteors you accuse,
And ask, 'if gracious God would storms produce?'
You ne'er reflect, that by the driving wind
The air from noxious vapours is refin'd;
Freed from the putrid seeds of pain and death,
That living creatures might not, by their breath,
Through their warm veins, instead of vital food,
Disperse contagion, and corrupt their blood.
Without the wind, the ship were made in vain,
Adventurous merchants could not cross the main,
Nor sever'd realms their gainful trade maintain.
Then, with this wise reflection you disturb
Your anxious thought, 'that our terrestrial orb
In many parts is not by man possess'd,
With too much heat, or too much cold, oppress'd.'
But in mistake you this objection found:
Unnumber'd isles and spacious tracts of ground,
Which feel the scorching sun's directer beam,
And did to you inhospitable seem,

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With tawny nations, or with black, abound,
With noble rivers lav'd, with plenty crown'd;
And regions too from the bright orb remote
Are peopled, which you unfrequented thought.
  But could Lucretius on the sun reflect,
His proper distance from the earth respect,
Observe his constant road, his equal pace,
His round diurnal, and his annual race;
Could he regard the nature of the light,
Its beauteous lustre, and its rapid flight,
And its relation to the sense of sight;
Could he to all these miracles advert,
And not in all perceive one stroke of art?
Grant, that the motions of the sun are such,
That some have light too little, some too much:
Grant, that in different tracts he might have roll'd,
And given each clime more equal heat and cold:
Yet view the revolutions, as they are,
Does there no wisdom, no design appear?
Could any but a knowing, prudent Cause,
Begin such motions, and assign such laws?
If the Great Mind had form'd a different frame,
Might not your wanton wit the system blame?
Though here you all perfection should not find,
Yet is it all the' Eternal Will design'd:
It is a finish'd world, and perfect in its kind!
Not that its regions every charm include,
With which celestial empires are endued;
Nor is consummate goodness here confer'd,
If we perfection absolute regard;
But what's before asserted, we repeat,
Of the vast whole it is a part complete.
  But since you are displeas'd the partial sun
Is not indulgent to the frigid zone;

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Suppose more suns in proper orbits roll'd,
Dissolv'd the snows, and chas'd the polar cold;
Or grant that this revolv'd in such a way,
As equal heat to all he might convey,
And give the distant poles their share of day;
Observe how prudent nature's icy hoard,
With all her nitrous stores, would be devour'd;
Then would unbalanc'd heat licentious reign,
Crack the dry hill, and chap the russet plain;
Her moisture all exhal'd, the cleaving earth
Would yield no fruit, and bear no verdant birth.
You of the pools and spacious lakes complain,
And of the liquid deserts of the main,
As hurtful these, or useless, you arraign.
Besides the pleasure which the lakes afford,
Are not their waves with fish delicious stor'd?
Does not the wide capacious deep, the sky
With dewy clouds, the earth with rain supply?
Do not the rivers, which the valley lave,
Creep through the secret subterranean cave,
And to the hills convey the refluent wave?
You then must own, the earth the ocean needs,
Which thus the lake recruits, the fountain feeds.
The noxious plant, and savage animal,
Which you the earth's reproach and blemish call,
Are useful various ways; if not for food,
For manufactures or for medicine good.
Thus we repel with reason, not evade,
The bold objections by Lucretius made.
Pyrrhonians next, of like ambitious aim,
Wanton of wit, and panting after fame,
Who strove to sink the sects of chief renown,
And on their ruin'd schools to raise their own;

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Boldly presum'd with rhetorician pride,
To hold of any question either side,
They thought, in every subject of debate,
In either scale the proof of equal weight.
Ask, if a God existent they allow?
The vain declaimers will attempt to show,
That, whether you renounce him, or assert,
There's no superior proof on either part.
Suppose a God, we must, say they, conclude
He lives; if so, he is with sense endued;
And, if with sense endued, may pain perceive,
And what can suffer pain may cease to live.
Pyrrhonians, we a living God adore,
An unexhausted spring of vital power:
But his immortal, uncreated life,
No torment feels, and no destructive grief.
Does he by different organs taste or hear?
Or by an eye do things to him appear?
Has he a muscle, or extended nerve,
Which to impart or pain or pleasure serve?
Of all perfection possible possess'd,
He finds no want, nor is with woe oppress'd.
Though we can ne'er explore the life divine,
And sound the bless'd abyss by reason's line,
Yet 'tis not, mortal man, a transient life, like thine.
Others, to whom the whole mechanic tribe
With an harmonious sympathy subscribe,
Nature with empire universal crown,
And this high queen the world's Creator own.
If you, what builder rear'd the world, demand?
They say, 'twas done by Nature's powerful hand:
If, whence its order and its beauty rose?
Nature, they say, did so the frame dispose:

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If, what its steady motions does maintain,
And holds of causes and effects the chain?
O'er all her works this Sovereign cause presides,
Upholds the orbs, and all their motions guides.
Since to her bounty we such blessings owe,
Our generous Benefactor let us know.
When the word Nature you express, declare,*
Form'd in your minds what image does appear?
Can you that term of doubtful sound explain?
Show it no idle offspring of the brain?
Sometimes, by Nature, your enlighten'd school
Intends of things the universal whole;
Sometimes, it is the order that connects
And holds the chain of causes and effects;
Sometimes, it is the manner and the way
In which those causes do their force convey,
And in effects their energy display.
That she's the work itself, you oft assert,
As oft the' artificer, as oft the art;
That is, that we may Nature clearly trace,
And by her marks distinctly know her face;
She's now the building, now the architect,
And now the rule which does his hand direct.
But let this empress be whate'er you please;
Let her be all or any one of these;
She is with reason, or she's not, endued!
If you the first affirm, we thence conclude
A God, whose being you oppose, you grant:
But if this mighty queen does reason want,

* Cooper seems to have defined this poetic turn most concisely and happily.

> '*Nature* is but a name for an effect,
> Whose cause is GOD!'

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How could this noble fabric be design'd,
And fashion'd by a maker brute and blind?
Could it of art such miracles invent,
And raise a beauteous world of such extent?
Still at the helm does this dark pilot stand,
And with a steady, never-erring hand,
Steer all the floating worlds, and their set course command?

That clearer strokes of masterly design,
Of wise contrivance, and of judgment, shine
In all the parts of nature, we assert,
Than in the brightest works of human art:
And shall not those be judg'd the' effect of thought,
As well as these with skill inferior wrought?
Let such a sphere to India be convey'd,
As Archimede or modern Hugens* made;
Will not the Indian, though untaught and rude,
This work the' effect of wise design conclude?
Is there such skill in imitation shown?
And in the things, we imitate, is none?
Are not our arts, by artful nature taught,
With pain and careful observation sought?

Behold the painter, who with nature vies:
See his whole soul exerted in his eyes!
He views her various scenes, intent to trace
The master lines that form her finish'd face:
Are thought and conduct in the copy clear,
While none in all th' original appear?

Tell us, what master, for mechanics fam'd,
Has one machine so admirably fram'd.

* Christian Huygens, probably, is here designated, who so far improved the powers of the telescope as to discover the ring of Saturn.

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Where you will art in such perfection grant
As in a living creature, or a plant?
Declare what curious workmanship can vie
Or with a hand or foot, an ear or eye?
That can for skill as much applause deserve,
As the fine texture of the fibrous nerve;
Or the stupendous system, which contains
The' arterial channels, or the winding veins?
What artificial frame, what instrument,
Did one superior genius yet invent,
Which to the bones or muscles is prefer'd,
If you their order, form, or use, regard?
Why then to works of nature is assign'd
An author unintelligent and blind,
When ours proceed from choice and conscious mind?

To this you say, 'that Nature's are indeed
Most artful works, but then they ne'er proceed
From Nature, acting with design and art,
Who, void of choice, her vigour does exert;
And by unguided motion things produce,
Regardless of their order, end, or use.'
By Tully's mouth thus Cotta does dispute;
But thus, with ease, the Roman we confute.

Say, if in artful things no art is shown,
What are the certain marks, that make it known?
How will you artful from unartful bound,
And not the' ideas in our mind confound?
Than this no truth displays before our sight
A brighter beam, or more convincing light;
That skilful works suppose a skilful cause,
Which acts by choice, and moves by prudent laws.
Where you, unless you are as matter blind,
Conduct and beauteous disposition find,

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Conspiring order, fitness, harmony,
Use, and convenience; will you not agree
That such effects could not be undesign'd,
Nor could proceed but from a knowing mind?
  Old systems you may try, or new ones raise,
May shift and wind, and plot a thousand ways;
May various words, and forms of diction use,
And with a different cant the' unjudging ear amuse;
You may affirm, that chance did things create,
Or let it Nature be, or be it fate;
Body alone, inert and brute, you'll find,
The cause of all things is by you assign'd.
And, after all your fruitless toil, if you
A cause distinct from matter will allow,
It must be conscious, not like matter blind,
And show you grant a God, by granting mind.
  Vaninus next, a hardy modern chief,*
A bold opposer of Divine Belief,
Attempts religion's fences to subvert,
Strong in his rage, but destitute of art;
In impious maxims fix'd, he Heaven defied,
An unbelieving, anti-martyr died.
Strange! that an atheist pleasure should refuse,
Relinquish life, and death in torment choose.
Of science what a despicable share
Vaninus own'd, his publish'd dreams declare.
Let impious wits applaud a godless mind,
As bless'd with piercing sight, and sense refin'd,
Contriv'd and wrought by Nature's careful hand,
All the proud schools of learning to command;
Let them pronounce each patron of their cause
Claims by distinguish'd merit just applause;

* Lucilio Vanini, an Italian atheist, who suffered at the stake for his impieties, in 1619.

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Yet I this writer's want of sense arraign,
Treat all his empty pages with disdain,
And think a grave reply mispent and vain:
To borrow light his error to amend,
I would the atheist to Vaninus send.
At length Britannia's soil, immortal shame!
Brought forth a sage* of celebrated name,
Who with contempt on bless'd religion trod,
Mock'd all her precepts, and renounc'd his God.
As awful shades and horrors of the night
Disturb the mother, and the child affright;
Who see dire spectres through the gloomy air
In threatening forms advance, and shuddering hear
The groans of wandering ghosts, and yellings of [despair:
'From the same spring (he says) devotion flows,
Conscience of guilt from dread of vengeance rose;
Religion is the creature of the spleen,
And troubled fancy forms the world unseen;
That timorous minds, with self-tormenting care,
Create those awful phantoms which they fear.'
Such arms were us'd by impious chiefs of old,
Vain as this modern hero, and as bold.
Who would not this philosopher adore,
For finding worlds discover'd long before?
Can he one flower in all his garden show
Which in his Grecian master's did not grow?
And yet, imperious, with a teacher's air,
Boastful, he claims a right to wisdom's chair;
Gasping with ardent thirst of false renown,
With Grecian wreaths he does his temples crown,
Triumphs with borrow'd spoils, and trophies not his own.

* Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher of Malmsbury, and author of 'Leviathan,' &c.

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'The world, he grants, with clouds was overspread;
Truth ne'er erected yet her starry head,
Till he, bright genius, rose to chase the night,
And through all nature shone with new-sprung light.'

But let the' inquirer know, proud Briton! why
Hope should not gods, as well as fear supply;
Does not the' idea of a God include
The notion of beneficent and good;
Of one to mercy, not revenge, inclin'd,
Able and willing to relieve mankind?
And does not this idea more appear
The object of our hope, than of our fear?
Then tell us, why this passion, more than that,
Should build their altars, and the gods create?

But let us grant the weak and timorous mind
To superstitious terrors is inclin'd;
That horrid scenes, and monsters form'd in air,
By night the children and the mother scare;
That apparitions, by a fever bred,
Or by the spleen's black vapours fill the head;
Does that affect the sage of sense refin'd,
Whose body's healthful, and serene his mind.
Yet more, insulting Briton! let us try
Your reason's force, your arguments apply.
You say, 'since spectres from the fancy flow,
To timorous fancy gods their being owe;
Since phantoms to the weak seem real things,
Religion from mistake and weakness springs.'

But though the vulgar have illusions seen,
Thought objects were without, that were within;
Yet we from hence absurdly should conclude,
All objects of the mind the mind delude:

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That out ideas idle are, that none
Were ever real, and that nothing's known.
  But leaving phantoms and illusive fear,
Let us at reason's judgment-seat appear;
There let the question be severely tried;
By an impartial sentence we abide;
The' Eternal Mind's existence we sustain,
By proofs so full, by evidence so plain,
That none of all the sciences have shown
Such demonstration of the truths they own.
  Spinosa next,* to hide his black design,
And to his side the' unwary to incline,
For heaven his ensigns treacherous displays,
Declares for God, while he that God betrays;
For whom he's pleas'd such evidence to bring,
As saves the name, while it subverts the thing.
  Now hear his labour'd scheme of impious use:
'No substance can another e'er produce;
Substance no limit, no confinement knows,
And its existence from its nature flows;
The substance of the universe is one,
Which is the self-existent God alone.
The spheres of ether, which the world enclose,
And all the' apartments, which the whole compose;
The lucid orbs, the earth, the air, the main,
With every different being they contain,
Are one prodigious aggregated God,
Of whom each sand is part, each stone and clod;
Supreme perfections in each insect shine,
Each shrub is sacred, and each weed divine.'

* Benediet de Spinoza was by birth a Jew, lived some time in the profession of Christianity, and died an atheist, in the year 1677. His hypothesis is said to have been derived from Strabo, and the doctrines of the Stoics.

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Sages, no longer Egypt's sons despise,
For their cheap gods, and savoury deities!
No more their course divinities revile!
To leeks, to onions, to the crocodile,
You might your humble adorations pay,
Were you not gods yourselves, as well as they.
As much you pull religion's altars down,
By owning all things God, as owning none;
For should all beings be alike divine,
Of worship if an object you assign,
God to himself must veneration shew,
Must be the idol and the votary too;
And their assertions are alike absurd,
Who own no God, or none to be ador'd!

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BOOK. IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The introduction. No happy man that has not conquered the fears of death. The inability of the Epicurean scheme to accomplish that end. Religion only capable of subduing those fears. The hypothesis of Epicurus concerning the formation of the universe shown to be absurd. I. In a more general survey of the parts of the universe. II. By a more close and strict examination of his scheme. The principle of motion not accounted for by that scheme; nor the determination of it one way. Pondus, gravity, innate mobility, words without a meaning. Descent of atoms; upwards and downwards, a middle or centre absurdly asserted by Epicurus in infinite space. His hopothesis not to be supported, whether his matter be supposed finite or infinite. His ridiculous assertion relating to the diurnal and annual motion of the sun. The impossibility of forming the world by the casual concourse of atoms. They could never meet if they moved with equal speed. Primitive atoms, being the smallest parts of matter, would move more slowly than bodies of greater bulk, which have more gravity; yet these are absurdly supposed to move the swiftest. His assertion, that some primitive atoms have a direct, and others an inclining motion, implies a contradiction. Lucretius's explanation of this inclining motion of some first atoms not intelligible. The inexplicable difficulty of stopping the atoms in their flight, and causing them to settle in a formed world. The ponderous earth not to be sustained in liquid air. The Epicurean formation of the heavens very ridiculous. No account given by the Epicureans how the sun and stars are upheld in fluid ether. Their idle account of the formation of the air. The variety of figure and size given by Epicurus to his atoms, a convincing proof of wisdom and design. Another proof is the disproportion of the moist and dry atoms in the for-

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mation of the earth. His ludicrous and childish account of the formation of the hollow for the sea. No account given by Epicurus, or his followers, of the motion of the heavenly orbs, particularly of the sun.

CARUS, we grant no man is bless'd, but he
Whose mind from anxious thoughts of death is free.
Let laurel wreaths the victor's brows adorn,
Sublime through gazing throngs in triumphs borne;
Let acclamations ring around the skies,
While curling clouds of balmy incense rise;
Let spoils immense, let trophies gain'd in war,
And conquer'd kings, attend his rolling car;
If dread of death, still unsubdued remains,
And secret o'er the vanquish'd victor reigns;
The' illustirous slave in endless thraldom bears
A heavier chain than his led captive wears.
With swiftest wing, the fears of future fate
Elude the guards, and pass the palace gate;
Traverse the lofty rooms, and uncontroul'd
Fly hovering round the painted roofs, and bold
To the rich arras cling, and perch on busts of gold;
Familiar horrors haunt the monarch's head,
And thoughts, ill-boding, from the downy bed
Chase gentle sleep; black cares the soul infest,
And broider'd stars adorn a troubled breast;
In vain they ask the charming lyre, in vain
The flatterer's sweeter voice, to lull their pain;
Riot and wine but for a moment please;
Delights they oft enjoy, but never ease.

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What are distinction, honour, wealth, and state,
The pomp of courts, the triumphs of the great;
The numerous troops, that envied thrones secure,
And splendid ensigns of imperial power?
What the high palace, rear'd with vast expense,
Unrivall'd art, and luxury immense,
With statues grac'd by ancient Greece supplied,
With more than Persian wealth, and Tyrian pride?
What are the foods of all delicious kinds,
Which now the huntsman, now the fowler, finds;
The richest wines, which Gallia's happy field,
Which Tuscan hills, or thine, Iberia, yield?
Nature deprav'd abundance does pursue;
Her first and pure demands are cheap and few.
What health promotes, and gives, unenvied peace,
Is all expenseless, and procur'd with ease.
Behold the shepherd, see the' industrious swain,
Who ploughs the field, or reaps the ripen'd grain,
How mean, and yet how tasteful, is their fare?
How sweet their sleep! their souls how free from care!
They drink the streaming crystal, and escape
The' inflaming juices of the purple grape;
And, to protect their limbs from rigorous air,
Garments, their own domestic work, they wear:
Yet thoughts of death their lonely cots molest,
Affright the hind, and break the labourer's rest.
Since these reflections on approaching fate
Distrust and ill-presaging care create;
'Tis clear we strive for happiness in vain,
While fears of death within insulting reign.

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But then Lucretian wits absurdly frame,
To sink those inbred fears, their impious scheme.
To chase the horrors of a conscious mind,
They desperate means and wild expedients find;
The hardy rebels, aiming to appease
Their fierce remorse, and dream a while at ease,
Of crying guilt the' avenging power disown,
And pull their high Creator from his throne;
That done, they mock the threats of future pain,
As monstrous fictions of the poet's brain.
Thy force alone, Religion! Death disarms,
Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms·
Soften'd by thee, the grisly form appears
No more the horrid object of our fears;
We, undismay'd, this awful power obey,
That guides us through the safe, though gloomy way
Which leads to life, and to the blest abode
Where ravish'd minds enjoy, what here they own'd,
a God!
Regard, ye sages of Lucretian race,
Nature's rich dress; behold her lovely face,
Look all around, terrestrial realms survey,
The isles, the rivers, and the spacious sea;
Observe the air, view with attentive eyes
The glorious concave of the vaulted skies;
Could these from casual hits, from tumult those,
arise?
Can rule and beauty from distraction grow?
Can symmetry from wild confusion flow?
When atoms in the unmeasur'd space did rove,
And in the dark for doubtful empire strove;
Did intervening chance the feuds compose,
Establish friendship, and disarm the foes?

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Did this the ancient darksome horrors chase,
Distinction give, and spread celestial grace
O'er the black districts of the empty space?
Could atoms, which with undirected flight,
Roam'd through the void, and rang'd the realms of night,
Of reason destitute, without intent,
Depriv'd of choice, and mindless of event,
In order march, and to their posts advance,
Led by no guide, but undesigning chance?
What did the' entangled particles divide,
And sort the various seeds of things allied?
To make primeval elements select
All the fit atoms, and the' unfit reject?
Distinguish hot from cold, and moist from dry,
Range some to form the earth, and some the sky?
From the embrace, and gloomy arms, of night,
What freed the glimmering fire, and disengag'd the light?
Could Chance such just and prudent measures take?
To frame the world, such distribution make?
If to your builder you will conduct give,
A power to choose, to manage, and contrive;
Your idol Chance, suppos'd inert and blind,
Must be inroll'd an active conscious mind.
Did this, your wise and sovereign architect,
Design the model, and the world erect?
Were by her skill the deep foundations laid,
The globes suspended, and the heavens display'd,
By what elastic engines did she rear
The starry roof, and roll the orbs in air?
On the formation of the earth reflect;
Is this a blind fortuitous effect?

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Did all the grosser atoms, at the call
Of Chance, file off, to form the ponderous ball,
And undetermin'd into order fall?
Did of themselves the' assembled seeds arrive,
And without art this artful frame contrive?
To build the earth, did chance materials choose,
And through the parts cementing glue diffuse;
Adjust the frontier of the sea and soil,
Balance and hang in air the finish'd pile?
Ye towering hills, whose snowy peaks arise
Above the clouds, and winter in the skies;
Ye rocks, which on the shores your heads advance;
Are you the labour and the care of chance?
To draw up stones of such prodigious weight,
And raise the' amazing heaps to such a height.
What huge machine, what forceful instrument,
Did your blind builder of the world invent?
Could it distinguish, could it wall around
The damp and dark apartments under ground;
With rocky arches vault the hollow caves,
And form the tracks of subterranean waves;
Extend the different mineral veins, and spread
For rich metallic ores the genial bed?
What could prepare the gulfs to entertain
Between their shores the interposing main;
Disjoin the land, the various realms divide,
And spread with scatter'd isles the' extended tide?
Regard the' unnumber'd wonders of the deep,
Where confluent streams, their race completed, sleep:
Did Chance the compass take, and in the dark
The wide dimensions of the ocean mark;
Then dig the ample cave, and stretch the shores,
Whose winding arms confine the liquid stores,

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Which, gushing from the mountain to the main,
Through verdant vallies draw their humid train?
Did it design the deep abyss, and spread
The ancient waters on their central bed?
To the wild flood did sovereign Fortune say,
'Thus far advance, and here thy billows stay;
Be this thy barrier, this enclosing sand
Thou shalt not pass, nor overflow the land!'
And do the waves revere her high command?
Did chemic Chance the furnaces prepare,
Raise all the labour-houses of the air,
And lay crude vapours in digestion there;
Where Nature is employ'd, with wondrous skill,
To draw her spirits, and her drops distil;
Meteors for various purposes to form,
The breeze to cheer, to terrify the storm?
Did she extend the gloomy clouds on high,
Where all the' amazing fireworks of the sky
In unconcocted seeds fermenting lie,
Till the imprison'd flames are ripe for birth,
And ruddy bolts, exploded, wound the earth?
What ready hand applies the kindled match,
Which evening trains of unctuous vapours catch?
Whence shoots with lambent flight the falling star,
And flames, unhurtful, hovering dance in air?
What curious loom does Chance by evening spread?
With what fine shuttle weave the virgin's thread,
Which, like the spider's net, hangs on the grassy mead?
Let us the moulds to fashion meteors know,
How these produce the hail, and those the snow?
What gave the exhalations wings to rise,
To leave their centre, and possess the skies?

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Let us no longer missive weapons throw,
But close the fight, and grapple with the foe;
Submit to reason's strictest test their scheme,
And by mechanic laws pursue the huddled frame.
See, how the' ambitious architects design:
To rear the world without the power divine,
As principles, the great contrivers place
Unbounded matter in unbounded space:
'Matter was first, in parts minute, endued
With various figures, various magnitude;
Some, moving in the spacious infinite,
Describe a line oblique, and some a right;
For, did not some from a straight course deflect,
They could not meet, they could no world erect:
While unfatigued from endless ages past,
They rang'd the dark interminable waste,
Oft clashing and rencountering in their flight,
Some atoms leap aside, and some upright;
They various ways recoil, and swiftly flow
By mutual repercussions to and fro,
Till, shuffled and entangled in their race,
They clasp each other with a close embrace;
Combin'd by concourse, mingled and compress'd,
They grow in bulk, and complicated rest.
Hence did the world and all its parts arise!
Hence the bright sun and stars, and hence the skies!
Hence sprung the air, the ocean, and the earth!
And hence all nature had its casual birth!'
If you demand what wise-directing mind
The wondrous platform of the world design'd;
Did range, divide, and in their order place,
The crude materials of the' unfashion'd mass;
Did move, direct, and all the parts control,
With perfect skill, to serve the beauteous whole;

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Fortune to this high honour they advance,
And no surveyor want, no guide, but chance.
  Lucretian masters, now to make it plain
In building worlds how raw you are, and vain;
Grant that before this mighty frame was rear'd,
Before confusion fled, and light appear'd,
In the dark void and empty realms of night
Your restless atoms did pursue their flight;
And in their adverse paths, and wild career,
By chance rencounter, and by chance cohere;
Thus clasp'd in strict embraces, they produce
Unnumber'd casual forms for different use:
You, who to clearer reason make pretence,
Of wit refin'd, and eminent in sense,
Let us, ye sons of Epicurus, know
The *spring*, whence all these various motions flow.
What vigour push'd primeval atoms on?
Was it a foreign impulse, or their own?
If 'twas a foreign delegated force, [course;
Which mov'd those bodies, and control'd their
Asserting this, you your own scheme destroy,
And power divine, to form the world, employ.
If from a moving principle within
Your active atoms did their flight begin,
That spring, that moving principle, explain,
And in the schools unrivall'd you shall reign;
Declare its nature, and assign its name;
For motion, and its cause, are not the same.
  'We know, you'll tell us, 'tis impulsive weight,
Mobility, or power to move innate.'
Profound solution! worthy of your schools,
Where reason in its boasted freedom rules.
But thus you mock mankind, and language use,
Not to inform the mind, but to amuse.

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Of motion we the principle demand;
You say, ''Tis power to move;' and there you stand!
But is it to explain, to change the name?
Is not the doubt in different words the same?
Do you reveal the spring of motion more,
By wisely calling that a 'moving power,'
Which we had term'd a 'principle' before?
The youngest head new-vers'd in reasoning knows
That motion must a 'power to move' suppose;
Which while in vain you labour to unfold,
You clearly tell us, that Lucretians hold
An active spring, a principle approve,
Distinct from matter, which must matter move.
Matter, as such, abstracted in the mind,
We from a power to move divested find,
Not more to motion than to rest inclin'd;
The power, which motion does to matter give,
We therefore most distinct from both conceive;
A power to nature given by Nature's LORD,
When first he spoke the high creating word,
When for his world materials he prepar'd,
And on each part this energy confer'd.

Ye vain philosophers! presumptuous race!
Who would the Great Eternal Mind displace;
Take from the world its Maker, and advance
To his high throne your thoughtless idol Chance:
Let us the' inquiry by just steps pursue;
With motion we your atoms will endue;
We ask, when in the spacious void they stray,
Why still they beat one track, and move one way?
Still the same flight why do their parties take?
Why this, or that way, no digression make?

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What will to this our Atomists reply?
They answer 'by an innate gravity
The ponderous bodies still are downward borne,
And never upwards of themselves return.'
Acute and solid answer! see a flight,
Worthy of finest wit, and clearest sight!
Do not these wise mechanic masters know,
That no man can conceive, or high or low,
Nor find distinction of superior place,
Or of inferior, in the empty space
Uncircumscrib'd, and ignorant of bound,
And where no midst, no centre, can be found?
Perhaps, your master's doctrine to sustain,
And matter's downward motion to explain,
You with this famous Gallic* friend assert,
'That is superior, whence your atoms start,
And that inferior, in the empty space,
To which they all direct their rapid race.'
Now let us recollect, and what you say
At large, in one contracted view survey.
You say, 'your atoms move;' we ask you, why?
'Because it is their nature,' you reply.
But since that native power you never show,
You only say they move, because they do;
But let your atoms move, we bid you say,
Why they move this, and not a different way?
You tell us, 'tis from inbred gravity;
That is, you tell us, 'tis you know not why.
Till what is gravity you let us know,
By senseless words how can we wiser grow?
We give you this ingenite, moving force, [course;
That makes them always downward take their

* Perhaps De Mazolen, the French translator of Lucretius.

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We then demand, which place inferior is
Within the spacious unconfin'd abyss?
You say, 'tis that, to which the atoms bend
Their swift carreer, for still they must descend;'
That is, they downward move, because they
downward tend.

Let us, Lucretians, now our task pursue,
And of your scheme remaining wonders view.
Say, if your atoms of immortal race
Are equal and commensurate to space?
If so, the boundless vast immensity
While thus possess'd would full of matter be;
For in the vacant (as your schools approve)
Should finite matter be suppos'd to move,
Not knowing how to stop, or where to stay,
It unobstructed must pursue its way,
Be lost in void immense, and dissipated stray;
The scattering bodies never would combine,
Nor to compose a world by concourse join,
But, if all space is full, if all possess'd,
Which supposition you embrace as best,
Then crowded matter would for ever rest;
Nature no change of place had ever seen;
Where all is full, no motion can begin;
For, if it should, you'll be compell'd to say,
Body does body pierce, to force its way;
Or unconfin'd immensity retreats,
To give your atoms room to change their seats.
And here with us Lucretius does agree,
That, if some place from matter be not free,
In plenitude no motion could commence,
All would be stagnate in the vast immense.

If it be said, small parts of empty space
Are interspers'd through all the spreading mass,
By which some bodies give to others place;

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Then matter, you must grant, would finite be,
And stretch unequal to immensity;
And then, as Epicurus judges right,
It would for ever take a useless flight,
Lost in expansion void and infinite.
Besides, allowing through the' extended whole
Small scatter'd spaces not of body full,
Then matter, you Lucretians must agree,
Has not existence from necessity;
For if its being necessary were,
Why are some parts of space from matter clear?
Why does it here exist, and why not there?
Lucretians, now, which side you please embrace:
If in your void you finite substance place,
'Tis dissipated through the' immense abyss,
And you to form the world materials miss;
You'll not the progress of your atoms stay,
Nor to collect the vagrants find a way.
Thus too your master's scheme will be destroy'd,
Who, wholly to possess the boundless void,
No less than matter infinite employ'd.
If you, in honour to your founder's skill,
The boundless void with boundless substance fill,
Then tell us, how you can your bodies roll
Through space, of matter so completely full?
The force this single reason does exert,
Will the foundations of your scheme subvert;
Nor were it needful to pursue the blow,
Or form a fresh attack, unless to show
How slight your works in every quarter are,
How ill your huddled sentiments cohere.
Be this, O Greece, thy everlasting shame,
That thoughtless Epicurus rais'd a name,
Who built by artless chance this mighty frame.

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Could one whose wit such narrow limits bound,
Nature, thy depths unfathomable sound;
Of his sagacious thoughts to give a part,
Does not this wise philosopher assert
The radiant sun's extinguish'd every night,
And every morn, rekindled, darts his light?
That the vast orb which casts so far his beams,
Is such, or not much bigger than he seems?
That the dimensions of his glorious face
Two geometric feet do scarce surpass?
Does he not make the fickle winds convey
The sun revolving through his crooked way?
But, since his school has gain'd such spreading fame,
And modern wits his master-skill proclaim;
Let us yet further carry this debate,
And, as you ask, confer on matter weight,
To make it move within the vast abyss,
And downward too, ev'n where no downward is.
If this be true, as you Lucretians say,
That atoms wing with equal speed their way,
Then how could this that atom overtake?
How could they clash, and how collisions make?
If in a line oblique your bodies rove,
Or in a perpendicular they move,
If some advance not slower in their race,
And some more swift should not pursue the chase,
How could they be entangled, how embrace?
'Tis demonstration, 'tis meridian light,
Those bodies ne'er could justle, ne'er could fight,
Nor by their mutual shocks be ruffled in their flight.

Since matter of a greater magnitude
Must be with greater gravity endued,

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Then the minutest parts must still proceed
With less, the greater with the greater speed.
Hence your first bodies, which the smallest are,
On which the swiftest motion you confer,
Must be contented with the slowest pace,
And yield to matter of more bulk the race.
How wondrous little must those atoms be,
Which you endow with such velocity!
Minute beyond conception, when we find
Bodies so small, where many are combin'd!
How many various figures must we take,
What numerous complications use, to make
Some compound things, so small of magnitude,
That all our senses they with ease elude!
Light exhalations, that from earth arise,
Attracted by the sun-beams through the skies,
Which the mysterious seeds of thunder bear,
Of winds, and all the meteors of the air;
Though they around us take their constant flight,
Their little size escapes the sharpest sight.
The fragrant vapours breath'd from rich perfumes,
From Indian spices, and Arabian gums,
Though many years they flow, will scarce abate
The odoriferous body's bulk or weight.
Though antimonial cups, prepar'd with art,
Their force to wine through ages should impart;
This dissipation, this profuse expense,
Nor shrinks their size, nor wastes their stores immense.
The powder which destructive guns explode,
And by its force their hollow wombs unload,
When rarefied of space, possesses more,
Five hundred times, than what it fill'd before.
The seeds of fern, which, by prolific heat,
Cheer'd and unfolded, form a plant so great,

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Are less a thousand times than what the eye
Can unassisted by the tube descry.
By glasses aided, we in liquor see
Some living things, minute to that degree,
That a prodigious number must unite,
To make the smallest object of the sight.
How little bodies must the light compound,
Which by your masters is corporeal own'd:
Since the vast deluge of refulgent rays,
Which in a day the sun a thousand ways
Through his wide empire lavishly conveys,
Were they collected in one solid mass,
Might not in weight a single drachm surpass!
At least those atoms wondrous small must be,
Small to an unconceivable degree;
Since though these radiant spoils, dispers'd in air,
Do ne'er return, and ne'er the sun repair,
Yet the bright orb, whence still new torrents flow,
Does no apparent loss, no diminution know.
Now, curious wits, who nature's work inspect
With rapture, with astonishment reflect
On the small size of atoms, which unite
To make the smallest particle of light!
Then how minute primeval atoms are,
From this account Lucretians may infer:
Yet they on these, without regard to right,
Confer the honour of the quickest flight.
Within the void, with what a swift career
Your rapid matter moves, will thus appear.
That all mix'd bodies are in speed outdone
By your first atoms, you with ease will own:
For compound beings can no motion have,
But what their first constituent atoms gave:

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Then your primeval substances exceed
The swift-wing'd wind, or swifter light, in speed.
How soon the sun-beams at the morning's birth
Leap down from heaven, and light upon the earth!
Prodigious flight! they in few moments pass
The vast ethereal interposing space.
Should you enjoin a rock so hard a task,
It would more years, than light will minutes, ask.
One atom then (so you'll be forc'd to say)
Must rocks and hills and the whole globe outweigh;
Since it exceeds them by its swifter flight,
And swifter motion springs from greater weight.
If nature's rule your atoms do enjoin
To move directly downward in a line;
Say, how can any from that path decline?
The' inclining motion then, which you suppose,
Whence the first concourse of your atoms rose,
Must the great maxim of your schools subvert,
Which still with one confederate voice assert,
That matter by necessity descends
In lines direct, yet part obliquely tends.
And thus your matter, by its native force,
To different points would steer a different course;
Determin'd by the same impulsive weight,
Move in a line oblique, and in a straight.
To heal your system's deep and ghastly wound,
Which this objection gives, Lucretius found
A method; who a motion did invent,
'Not straight entirely, nor entirely bent,
Which forms a line to crooked somewhat like,
Slanting almost, and, as it were, oblique.'
Who does not now this wondrous bard adore?
See reason's conquering light, and wit's resistless power?

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If atoms, after their eternal dance,
Into this beauteous fabric leap'd by chance;
If they combin'd by casual concourse; say,
What, in a free and unobstructed way,
Did in a full career your atoms stay?
What mounds, what force, when rushing from the height
Of space immense, could stop them in their flight?
Why in their road did they not forward pass?
But say, where now we find the settled mass,
Why did they cease from moving in despite
Of their own nature, and impelling weight?
Had the wise troops sagacity to know,
That, there arriv'd, they should no further go?
That, in this point of all the spacious void,
To form a world they were to be employ'd?
Did they, in prospect of so great a good,
In this one place of all the liquid road,
All their encumbering gravity unload?
Fatigued, and spent with labour infinite,
Did they grow torpid, and unapt for flight?
Or, in the' embrace and downy lap of air
Lull'd and enchanted, did they settle there?
Grant in this single place by chance they met,
That there by chance they did their weight forget;
It happen'd there they form'd a mighty mass,
Where yet no order, no distinction, was:
Let this be so; we ask you to explain
The wondrous power that did the parts sustain,
For still their nature and their weight remain.
What from descent should ponderous matter stay,
When no more ponderous matter stops its way,
Can airy columns prop the mighty ball,
Its pressure balance, and prevent its fall?

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And after this remains a mighty task,
Which more than human skill and power will ask,
The strong mysterious cements to unfold,
Which atoms strictly complicated hold.
But let us leave the heap in air's embrace,
To rest unmov'd within the empty space,
Which knows no height, or depth, or middle place;
Tell, how you build the chambers of the sky,
Extend the spheres, and hang the orbs on high?
You say, when matter first began to fall,
And settle into this terrestrial ball,
Press'd from the earth thin exhalations rose,
Vapours and steams, materials to compose
The spacious regions of the liquid air,
The heavens, and all the luminaries there:
These vapours soon (miraculous event!)
Shuffled by chance, and mix'd by accident,
Into such ranks and beauteous order fell,
As no effect of wisdom can excel.
Hence did the planets, hung in ether, stray!
Hence rose the stars, and hence the milky way!
Hence did the sun along the skies advance!
The source of day, but sprung from night and chance!
But who can show the legends, that record
More idle tales, or fable so absurd?
Does not your scheme affront ev'n vulgar sense;
That spheres of such a vast circumference,
That all the orbs, which in the regions roll,
Stretching from east to west, from pole to pole,
Should their constructure, and their beauty, owe
To vapours press'd from this poor ball below?
From this small heap could exhalations rise
Enough, and fit, to spread and vault the skies?
Lucretius thus the manner has display'd
How meteors, not how heavenly globes, are made.

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But grant the steams, which by expression rose,
Did all the spheres and every orb compose;
Since their ingenite gravity remains,
What girder binds, what prop the frame sustains?
The sun's bright beams, which you of matter make,
From heaven their downward flight perpetual take:
Why does not then his body, which outweighs
By infinite degrees his golden rays,
By its own force precipitated fall,
And hide in ruins this terrestrial ball?
Can air, unable to sustain the light,
Support the sun of such superior weight;
And all the ponderous heavenly orbs suspend
Against their nature, which does downward tend?
Tell, wise Lucretius, tell the secret art,
Which keeps the heavens and earth so long apart.
Thus too the air, press'd from this mass, you say,
Between the earth and skies expanded lay;
Not with intention that the solar light
Through the thin gulf might take an easy flight;
Or, that with nitrous food it should inspire
The breathing lungs, and feed the vital fire;
But mere contingence did the gulf extend,
Regardless of convenience, use, or end.
Now, vaunting poet! should it be confess'd,
That from the earth the air is thus express'd;
Since things by heavier things are upward thrown,
Which tend with stronger gravitation down;
Why are the sun, and the fair orbs of light,
All which so far exceed the air in weight,
Hung from the centre at a greater height?
Why do not these their nature's law obey,
Rush from above and near the centre stay,
And make all lighter bodies give them way?

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Tell us, Lucretius, why they ne'er pursue
This natural bent, and this undoubted due?
Since to the earth you give the middle place,
To which all heavy things direct their race,
If nothing does obstruct, by certain fate
Things would in order of their different weight
Lie round the earth, and make one mighty heap;
They would their place, as different strata, keep.
Nor would the air, or interceding sky,
Between the distant orbs and worlds divided lie;
Ether and air would claim the highest place,
The stars and planets would the earth embrace,
As now the ocean floats upon its face.
In vain you labour by mechanic rules,
In vain exhaust the reason of your schools,
These questions to resolve, and to explain
How separate worlds were made, and separate still
remain.

Since to your uncompounded atoms you
Figures in number infinite allow,
From which, by various combination, springs
This unconfin'd diversity of things?
Are not, in this, design and counsel clear?
Does not the wise Artificer appear,
Who the corporeal particles endued
With different shape, and different magnitude,
That from their mixtures all things might have birth,
In the wide sea, and air, and heaven, and earth?
To all these figures of distinguish'd kind,
And different sizes, are not ends assign'd?
Then own their cause did act with wise intent,
Which did those sizes square, and every shape invent.

When atoms first the world began to frame,
Is it not strange that every number came

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Of such a figure, and of such a size,
As serv'd to found the earth, and spread the skies?
Had they not met in such proportion, were
Their form and number not as now they are,
In a rude mass they had confus'dly join'd,
Not in a finish'd world, like this, combin'd.
Did these assembled substances reflect,
That here a beauteous frame they must erect?
Did they a general council wisely call,
To lay the platform of each mighty ball;
To settle prudent rules, and orders make,
In rearing worlds, what methods they should take?
To every atom was his task enjoin'd?
His post, and fellow-labourers, assign'd?
Did they consent what parts they should compose;
That these should ether make, or water those?
That some should be the moon, and some the earth?
Those give the sun, and these the planets birth?
If all these noble worlds were undesign'd,
And carried on without a conscious mind;
Oh, happy accident! auspicious chance!
That in such order made the work advance!
At length to such admir'd perfection brought
The finish'd structure, as it had been wrought
With art transcendent and consummate thought!

Since 'tis an outrage done to common sense
To fix a central point in space immense;
Why is a middle to the earth assign'd,
To which your ponderous bodies are inclin'd?
Besides, reflect how this terrestrial mass
Does the whole sea a thousand times surpass;
Which in a line, if drawn directly down,
More than a mile in depth is rarely known.
Now, if by chance more watery atoms came
Than earthy, to compose this wondrous frame;

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Or had they both in equal number met,
Which might as well have been, had chance thought [fit;
Or if the watery (we no further press)
Were but an hundred times in number less;
This globe had lain, if not a general flood,
At least a fen, a mass of ooze and mud,
With no rich fruit, or verdant beauty, bless'd,
Wild and unpeopled, or by man or beast.

Who will our orb's unequal face explain,
Which Epicurus made all smooth and plain?
How did thy rocks, O earth! thy hills, arise?
How did thy giant sons invade the skies?
Lucretius, that it happen'd thus, replies.

Now give us leave, great poet, to demand,
How the capacious hollow in the land
Was first produc'd, with ease to entertain
All the assembled waters of the main?
When earth was made, this hollow for the sea
Was form'd? but how it happen'd so to be?
'It on a time fell out, that every wave
Forsook the earth, and fill'd the mighty cave,
Which happen'd opportunely to be there,
Where now their heads the rolling billows rear.
It then fell out, that stones did rocks compose,
That vales subsided, and that hills arose.
Thus the formation of the world you know;
So all events fell out, and all things happen'd so.'

Can tales more senseless, ludicrous, and vain,
By winter-fires old nurses entertain?
Does this unfold how all things first were made,
Without divine and supernatural aid?
His penetration has Lucretius shown,
By saying things proceed from chance alone,
As their efficient cause; that is, from none?

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But let your troops, which rang'd the plains of night,
And through the vacant wing'd their careless flight,
The high command of ruling chance obey;
Unguided and unconscious of the way,
Let them advance to one determin'd place,
Prescrib'd by chance, in all the' unmeasur'd space;
Their proper stations undirected find,
To form a world that never was design'd;
Let all the rolling globes, and spacious skies,
From happy hits of heedless atoms rise;
Be thus the earth's unmov'd foundations laid,
Thus the thin regions of the air display'd;
Chance shall the planets in their place suspend,
Between these worlds the' ethereal plains extend;
Direct the sun to that convenient seat,
Whence he displays his lustre and his heat.
This labour, all this progress, is in vain,
Unless the orbs their various motions gain:
For let the sun in buoyant ether float,
Nor nearer to the earth, nor more remote;
Yet did his orb unmov'd its beams diffuse,
He'd sure destruction to the earth produce;
One half for heat, and one for cold, would pray;
This would abhor the night, and that the day:
Did he not yearly through the zodiac pass,
Were he not constant to his daily race,
He would not, by alternate shade and light,
Produce the needful change of day and night:
Nor would the various seasons of the year,
By turns revolving, rise and disappear.
Now can judicious atomists conceive,
Chance to the sun could this just impulse give,
By which the source of day so swiftly flies,
His stages keeps, and traverses the skies!

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We ask you, whence these constant motions flow?
Will learned heads reply, 'they happen'd so?"
You say, the solar orb, first mov'd by chance,
Does north and south, and east and west, advance!
We ask, why first in these determin'd ways
He chose to move? Why thence he never strays?
Why did he ne'er, since time began, decline
His round diurnal, or his annual line?
So steadily does fickle fortune steer
The' obedient orb, that it should never err;
Should never start aside, and never stray;
Never in pathless ether miss his way?
Why does he ne'er beyond the tropics go?
Why still revolve? why travel to and fro?
Will it a wise philosopher content,
To say these motions came by accident,
That all is undesign'd, fortuitous event?
But if the sluggish sun you'll not disturb,
But motion give to this terrestrial orb;
Still of the earth we the same question ask,
Which to explain, you have as hard a task.

Can Chance this frame, these artful scenes erect,
Which knows not works less artful to effect?
Did it mechanic engines e'er produce
A globe or tube of astronomic use?
Why do not vessels, built and rigg'd by chance,
Drawn in long order, on the billows dance?
Might not the Sovereign Cause with greater ease
A navy build, than make the winds and seas?
Let atoms once the form of letters take
By chance, and let those huddled letters make
A finish'd poem by a lucky hit,
Such as the Grecian, or the Mantuan, writ;
Then we'll embrace the doctrines you advance,
And yield the world's fair poem made by Chance.

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BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

The introduction. A description of the calamitous state of mankind, by reason of innumerable woes and sufferings to which they are obnoxious. Diseases of the body. Trouble and grief of mind. Violence and oppression. The vicissitude of human affairs, and the certain prospect of death. Whence it appears that it suits the state of mankind, and therefore is desirable, there should be a God. Arguments against the Fatalists, who assert the eternity of the world. There must be granted some self-existent and independent being. The corporeal world cannot be that being: proved from its mutability, and the variety of forms rising and disappearing in the several parts of nature; from the possibility of conceiving, without any consequent contradiction, less or more parts in the world than are actually existent; from the possibility of plants and animals having had different shapes, and limbs, from what they now have. The pretended fatal chain of things not self-existent and independent; because all its links or parts are dependent, and obnoxious to corruption. Fate, a word without sense or meaning. Two more arguments against the eternity of the world, from the contemplation of the light of the sun, and of motion. Aristotle's scheme considered and confuted.

Ah, hapless mortal man! ah, rigid fate!
What cares attend our short, uncertain state!
How wide a front, how deep and black a rear,
What sad varieties of grief and fear,

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Drawn in array, exert their fatal rage,
And gall obnoxious life through every stage,
From infancy to youth, from youth to age!

Who can compile a roll of all our woes?
Our friends are faithless, and sincere our foes;
The poison'd arrows of an envious tongue
Improve our errors, and our virtues wrong;
The' oppressor now with arbitrary might
Tramples on law, and robs us of our right;
Dangers unseen on every side invade,
And snares o'er all the' unfaithful ground are laid.

Oft wounds from foreign violence we feel,
Now from the ruffian's, now the warrior's, steel:
By bruises or by labour we are pain'd;
A bone disjointed, or a sinew strain'd;
Now festering sores afflict our tortur'd limbs:
Now to the yielding heart the gangrene climbs.

Acute distempers fierce our veins assail,
Rush on with fury, and by storm prevail;
Others with thrift dispense their stores of grief,
And by the sap prolong the siege of life;
While to the grave we for deliv'rance cry,
And, promis'd still, are still denied to die.

See colic, gout, and stone, a cruel train,
Oppos'd by all the healing race in vain;
Their various racks and lingering plagues employ,
Relieve each other, and by turns annoy,
And, tyrant-like, torment, but not destroy.
We noxious insects in our bowels feed,
Engender deaths, and dark destruction breed.
The spleen with sullen vapours clouds the brain,
And binds the spirits in its heavy chain:
Howe'er the cause fantastic may appear,
The' effect is real, and the pain sincere.

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Hydropic wretches by degrees decay,
Growing the more, the more they waste away;
By their own ruins they augmented lie,
With thirst and heat amidst a deluge fry:
And while in floods of water these expire,
More scorching perish by the fever's fire;
Stretch'd on our downy, yet uneasy beds,
We change our pillows, and we raise our heads;
From side to side in vain for rest we turn,
With cold we shiver, or with heat we burn;
Of night impatient, we demand the day:
The day arrives, and for the night we pray;
The night and day successive come and go,
Our lasting pains no interruption know.

Since man is born to so much woe and care,
Must still new terrors dread, new sorrows bear;
Does it not suit the state of human kind,
There should preside a good Almighty Mind;
A Cause Supreme, that might all nature steer,
Avert our danger, and prevent our fear;
Who, when implor'd, might timely succour give,
Solace our anguish, and our wants relieve;
Father of comfort, might our souls sustain,
When press'd with grief, and mitigate our pain?

'Tis certain something from all ages past
Without beginning was, and still will last;
For if of time one period e'er had been
When nothing was, then nothing could begin.
That things should to themselves a being give,
Reluctant reason never can conceive.
If you affirm, effects themselves produce,
You shock the mind, and contradiction choose;
For they, 'tis clear, must act and move, before
They were in being, or had motive power;

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As active causes must of right at once
Existence claim, and as effects renounce.
Then something is, which no beginning had,
A causeless cause, or nothing could be made,
Which must by pure necessity exist,
And whose duration nothing can resist.
Let us inquire, and search by due degrees,
What, who, this self-existent being is!
Should this material world's capacious frame
Uncaus'd and independent being claim:
It would, thus form'd and fashion'd as we see,
Derive existence from necessity,
And then to ages unconfin'd must last,
Without the least diversity or waste,
Necessity, view'd with attentive thought,
Does plain impossibility denote,
That things should not exist, which actual are,
Or in another shape or different modes appear.
But see in all corporeal nature's scene,
What changes, what diversities, have been!
Matter not long the same appearance makes,
But shifts her old, and a new figure takes:
If now she lies in winter's rigid arms,
Dishonour'd and despoil'd of all her charms,
Soft vernal airs will loose the' unkind embrace,
And genial dews renew her wither'd face;
Like fable nymphs transform'd, she's now a tree,
Now weeps into a flood, and streaming seeks the sea.
She's now a gaudy fly, before a worm,
Below a vapour, and above a storm;
This ooze was late a monster of the main,
That turf a lowing grazer of the plain,
A lion this did o'er the forest reign.

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Regard that fair, that branching laurel plant,
Behold that lovely blushing amarant;
One might have William's broken frame assum'd,
And one from bright Maria's dust have bloom'd.
These shifting scenes, these quick rotations, show
Things from necessity could never flow,
But must to mind and choice precarious being owe.

Let us suppose, that nature ever was
Without beginning, and without a cause;
As her first order, disposition, frame,
Must then subsist unchangeably the same,
So must our mind pronounce, it would not be
Within the reach of possibility,
That e'er the world a being could have had
Different from what it is, or could be made
Of more or less, or other parts than those
Which the corporeal universe compose.
Now, Fatalist, we ask, if those subvert
Reason's establish'd maxims, who assert
That we the world's existence may conceive,
Though we one atom out of Nature leave;
Though some one wandering orb, or twinkling star,
Were absent from the heavens, which now is there;
Though some one kind of plant, or fly, or worm,
No being had, or had another's form?

And might not other animals arise,
Of different figure, and of different size?
In the wide womb of possibility
Lie many things, which ne'er may actual be;
And more productions of a various kind
Will cause no contradiction in the mind.
'Tis possible the things in Nature found,
Might different forms and different parts have own'd:

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The boar might wear a trunk, the wolf a horn,
The peacock's train the bittern might adorn;
Strong tusks might in the horse's mouth have grown,
And lions might have spots, and leopards none.
But, if the world knows no superior cause,
Obeys no sovereign's arbitrary laws;
If absolute necessity maintains
Of causes and effects the fatal chains;
What could one motion stop, change one event?
It would transcend the wide, the vast extent,
The utmost stretch of possibility,
That things, from what they are, should disagree.
If, to elude this reasoning, you reply,
Things what they are, are by necessity;
Which never else so aptly could conspire
To serve the whole, and Nature's ends acquire;
To form the beauty, order, harmony,
Which we through all the works of Nature see:
Ready we this assertion will allow,
For what can more exalted wisdom show?
With zeal we this necessity defend,
Of means directed to their useful end:
But 'tis not that which fatalists intend,
Nor that which we oppose in this debate,
An uncontrol'd necessity of fate,
Which all things blindly does and must produce,
Unconscious of their goodness and their use,
Which cannot ends design, nor means convenient choose.
If you persist, and fondly will maintain
Of causes and effects an endless train;
That this successive series still has been,
Will never cease, and never did begin;

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That things did always, as they do, proceed,
And no first Cause, no wise Director, need:
Say, if no links of all your fatal chain
Free from corruption, and unchang'd, remain;
If of the whole each part in time arose,
And to a cause its borrow'd being owes;
How then the whole can independent be?
How have a being from necessity?
Is not the whole, ye learned heads, the same
With all the parts, and different but in name?
Could e'er that whole the least perfection show,
Which from the parts, that form it, did not flow,
Then, tell us, can it from its parts derive,
What in themselves those parts had not to give?
  Further to clear the subject in debate,
Inform us, what you understand by Fate.
Have you a just idea in the mind
Of this great cause of things by you assign'd?
If you the order and dependence mean,
By which effects upon their causes lean,
The long succession of the' efficient train,
And firm coherence of the' extended chain;
Then fate is nothing but a mode of things,
Which from continued revolution springs;
A pure relation and a mere respect
Between the cause effective and the' effect.
If causes and effects themselves are that
Which your clear-sighted schools intend by fate,
Then fate by no idea can be known,
'Tis one thing only, as a heap is one:
You no distinguish'd being by it mean,
But all the' effects and causes that have been.
If you assert, that each sufficient cause
Must act by fix'd inevitable laws;

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If you affirm this necessary state,
And tell us this necessity is fate;
When will you bless the world with light to see
The spring and source of this necessity?
Say, what did so dispose, so things ordain,
To form the links of all the casual chain,
That nature by inevitable force
Should run one ring, and keep one steady course?
That things must needs in one set order flow,
And all events must happen as they do?
Can you no proof of your assertion find?
Produce no reason to convince the mind,
That nature this determin'd way must go?
Are all things thus, because they must be so?
We grant with ease, there is necessity,
The source of things should self-existent be.
But then he's not a necessary cause;
He freely acts by arbitrary laws:
He gave to beings motive-energy,
And active things to passive did apply;
In such wise order all things did dispose,
That of events necessity arose:
Without his aid, say, how will you maintain
Your fatal link of causes? Hence 'tis plain,
While the word Fate you thus affect to use,
You coin a senseless term, the' unwary to amuse.
You, who assert the world did ne'er commence,
Prepare against this reasoning your defence.
If solar beams, which through the' expansion dart,
Corporeal are, as learned schools assert;
Since still they flow, and no supply repays
The lavish sun his dissipated rays;
Grant, that his radiant orb did ne'er begin,
And that his motions have eternal been;

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Then by eternal, infinite expense,
By unrecruited waste, and spoils immense,
By certain fate to slow destruction doom'd
His glorious stock long since had been consum'd;
Of light unthrifty, and profuse of day,
The ruin'd globe had spent his latest ray,
Dispers'd in beams eternally display'd,
Had lost in ether roam'd, and loose in atoms stray'd.
Grant that a grain of matter would outweigh
The light the sun dispenses in a day,
Through all the stages of his heavenly way;
That in a year the golden torrents, sent
From the bright source, its losses scarce augment:
Yet without end if you the waste repeat,
The' eternal loss grows infinitely great.
Then, should the sun of finite bulk sustain
In every age the loss but of a grain;
If we suppose those ages infinite,
Could there remain one particle of light?
Reflect, that motion must abate its force,
As more or less obstructed in its course;
That all the heavenly orbs, while turning round,
Have some resistance from the medium found;
Be that resistance ne'er so faint and weak,
If 'tis eternal, 'twill all motion break;
If in each age you grant the least decrease,
By infinite succession it must cease.
Hence, if the orbs have still resisted been
By air, or light, or ether, ne'er so thin;
Long since their motion must have been suppress'd,
The stars had stood, the sun had lain at rest;
So vain, so wild a scheme, you fatalists have dress'd.

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Let us the wise positions now survey
Of Aristotle's school, who's pleas'd to say—
'Nothing can move itself, no inward power
To any being motion can procure.
Whate'er is mov'd, its motion must derive
From something else, which must an impulse give;
And yet no being motion could begin;
Else motion might not have eternal been.'
That matter never did begin to move,
But in the' immense from endless ages strove,
The Stagyrite thus undertakes to prove:
He says, 'of motion time the measure is;
Then that's eternal too, as well as this.
Motion through ages without limit flows,
Since time, its measure, no beginning knows.'
This feeble base upholds our author's hopes,
And all his mighty superstructure props.
On this he all his towering fabric rears,
Sequel on sequel heaps, to reach the spheres.
But if this definition you deny
Of time, on which his building does rely,
You bring his lofty Babel from the sky;
A thousand fine deductions you confound,
Scatter his waste philosophy around,
And level all his structure with the ground.
We then this definition thus defeat;
Time is no measure, which can motion meet;
For men of reasoning faculties will see,
That time can nothing but duration be
Of beings: and duration can suggest
Nothing or of their motion, or their rest;
Only prolong'd existence it implies,
Whether the thing is mov'd or quiet lies.

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This single blow will all the pile subvert,
So proudly rais'd, but with so little art.
  But, since the Author has such fame acquir'd,
And as a god of science been admir'd,
A stricter view we'll of his system take,
And of the parts a short examen make.
Let us observe, what light his scheme affords,
His undigested heap of doubtful words.
Great Stagyrite, the lost inquirer show
The spring whence motion did for ever flow;
Since nothing of itself ere moves or strives,
Tell what begins, what the first impulse gives.
  Hear how the man, who all in fame surmounts,
For motion's spring and principle accounts.
To his supreme unmov'd, unactive God,
He the first sphere appoints, a bless'd abode;
Who sits supinely on his azure throne,
In contemplation of himself alone;
Is wholely mindless of the world, and void
Of providential care, and unemploy'd.
To all the spheres inferior are assign'd
Gods subaltern, and of inferior kind:
On these he self-existence does confer,
Who, as the God supreme, eternal are;
With admiration mov'd, and ardent love,
They all their spheres around in order move;
And from these heavenly revolutions flow
All motions, which are found in things below.
  If you demand by what impulsive force
The under-gods begin their circling course:
He says, 'as things desirable excite
Desire, and objects move the appetite;
So his first God, by kindling ardent love,
Does all the gods in seats inferior move!

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Thus mov'd, they move around their mighty spheres,
With their refulgent equipage of stars;
From sphere to sphere communicate the dance,
Whence all in heavenly harmony advance;
And from this motion propagated rise
All motions in the earth, and air, and skies.'
And thus by learned Aristotle's mind
All things were form'd, yet nothing was design'd.
He owns no choice, no arbitrary will,
No artist's hand, and no exerted skill;
All motion flows from necessary fate,
Which nothing does resist, or can abate;
Things sink and rise, a being lose or gain
In a coherent, undissolving chain
Of causes and effects, which nature's course sustain
The' unmoveable Supreme the rest does move,
As proper objects raise desire and love;
They, mov'd without their choice, without consent,
Move all their spheres around without intent;
Whate'er he calls his moving cause, to choose
He gives that cause no power, or to refuse.
And thus from fate all artful order springs,
This rear'd the world, this is the rise of things.
Now give us leave to ask, great Stagyrite,
How the first God the' inferior does excite?
Of his own subtance does he parts convey,
Whose motive-force the under-gods obey?
If so, he may be chang'd, he may decay.
But if by steadfast gazing they are mov'd,
And admiration of the object lov'd;
If those below their motive force acquire
From the strong impulse of divine desire;
Tell us what good your God Supreme can grant,
Which those beneath, to make them happy, want.

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If admiration of the God supreme,
And heavenly raptures, should their breasts inflame,
Is that of motion a resistless cause,
Of motion constant to eternal laws?
Might not each second god inactive lie
On his blue sphere, and fix his ravish'd eye
On the Supreme Unmoveable, and ne'er
Be forc'd to roll around his solid sphere?
Say, how could wonder drive them from their place?
How in a circle make them run their race?
How keep them steady in one certain pace?
He this a fundamental maxim lays,
That nature wisely acts in all her ways;
That she pursues the things which most conduce
To order, beauty, decency, and use.
Who can to reason this affront endure?
Should it derision cause, or anger more,
To hear a deep philosopher assert
That nature, not endued with skill or art,
Of liberty of choice, of reason void,
Still wisely acts, wherever she's employ'd?
Can actions be denominated wise,
Which from a brute necessity arise,
Which the blind agent never did intend,
The means unchosen, and unknown the end?
On this be laid the stress of this debate;
What wisely acts can never act by fate.
The means and end must first be understood;
The means, as proper; and the end, as good;
The act must be exerted with intent
By using means to gain the wish'd event.
But can a senseless and unconscious cause,
By foreign impulse mov'd, and fatal laws,

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This thing as good, and that as fit, respect,
Design the end, and then the means elect?
Nature, you grant, can no event intend,
Yet that she acts with prudence you pretend:
So nature wisely acts, yet acts without an end!

Yet while this prince of science does declare
That means or ends were never nature's care;
That things which seem with perfect art contriv'd,
By the resistless force of fate arriv'd;
This cautious master, to secure his fame,
And 'scape the atheist's ignominious name,
Did to his gods of all degrees allow
Counsel, design, and power to choose and know.
Yet, since he's pleas'd so plainly to assert
His gods no act of reasoning power exert,
No mark of choice, or arbitrary will,
Employ'd no prudence, and express'd no skill,
In making or directing nature's frame,
Which from his fate inevitable came;
These gods must, as to us, be brute and blind,
And as unuseful, as if void of mind;
Acting without intent, or care, or aim,
Can they our prayer regard, or praises claim?
Of all the irreligious in debate,
This shameful error is the common fate;
That though they cannot but distinctly see
In nature's works, and whole economy,
Design and judgment in a high degree;
This judgment, this design, they ne'er allow
Do from a cause endued with reason flow.
The art they grant, the' artificer reject,
The structure own, and not the architect;
That unwise Nature all things wisely makes,
And prudent measures without prudence takes.

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Grant that their admiration and their love
Of the first God may all the' inferior move;
Grant, too, though no necessity appears,
That, with their rapture mov'd, they move their spheres:
These questions let the Stagyrite resolve,
Why they at all, why in this way revolve?
Declare by what necessity control'd,
In one determin'd manner they are roll'd?
Why is their swift rotation west and east,
Rather than north and south, or east and west?
Why do not all the' inferior spheres obey
The highest sphere's inevitable sway?
Tell us, if all celestial motions rise
From revolutions of the starry skies.
Whence of the orbs the various motions come?
Why some the general road pursue; and some
In ether stray, and disobedient roam?
If yours the source of motion is, declare
Why this is fix'd, and that a wandering star?
Tell by what fate, by what resistless force,
This orb has one, and that another course?
How does the learned Greek the cause unfold,
With equal swiftness why the sun is roll'd
Still east and west, to mark the night and day?
To form the year, why through the' ecliptic way?
What magic, what necessity, confines
The solar orb between the tropic lines?
What charms in those enchanted circles dwell,
That with controlling power the sun repel?
The Stagyrite to this no answer makes;
Of the vast globe so little thought he takes,
That he to solve these questions never strives,
No cause or of its place or motion gives.

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But further yet, applauded Greek, suppose
Celestial motions from your spring arose;
That motion down to all the worlds below
From the first sphere may propagated flow:
Since you of things to show the' efficient source
Have always to necessity recourse;
From what necessity do spheres proceed
With such a measur'd, such a certain speed;
We fain would this mysterious cause explore,
Why motion was not either less or more,
But in this just proportion and degree,
As suits with Nature's just economy.
This is a cause, a right one too, we grant,
But 'tis the final, we the' efficient want;
With greater swiftness if the spheres were whirl'd,
The motion given to this inferior world
Too violent had been for nature's use,
Of too great force mix'd bodies to produce;
The elements, air, water, earth, and fire,
Which now to make compounded things conspire,
By their rude shocks could never have combin'd,
Or had been disengag'd as soon as join'd:
But then had motion in a less degree
Been given, than that which we in nature see,
Of greater vigour we had stood in need,
To mix and blend the elemental seed,
To temper, work, incorporate, and bind
Those principles, that thence of every kind
The various compounded beings might arise,
Which fill the earth and sea, and store the skies.
Say, what necessity, what fatal laws,
Did in such due proportion motion cause,
Nor more or less, but just so much as tends
To frame the world, and serve all nature's ends?

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Ask, why the highest of the rolling spheres,
Deck'd to profusion with refulgent stars,
And all with bright excrescences emboss'd,
Has the whole beauty of the Heavens engross'd;
When of the others, to dispel the night,
Each owns a single, solitary light;
Only one planet in a sphere is found,
Marching in air his melancholy round?
'Nature,' he tells us, 'took this prudent care,
That the sublimest and the noblest sphere
Should be with nobler decoration bless'd,
And in magnificence outshine the rest;
That so its greater ornament and state
Should bear proportion with its greater height.'
It seems then Nature does not only find
Means to be good, beneficent, and kind,
But has for beauty and for order car'd,
Does rank, and state, and decency, regard.
Now, should he not considering men forgive,
If, sway'd by this assertion, they believe
That Nature, which does decency respect,
Is something which can reason, choose, reflect?
Or that some wise director must preside
O'er Nature's works, and all her motions guide?
You here should that necessity declare,
Why all the stars adorn the highest sphere;
Say, how is this the' effect of fatal laws,
Without reflecting on a final cause?
One sphere has all the stars; we ask you why?
When you to beauty and to order fly,
You plain assert the truth which you deny:
That is, that Nature has wise ends in view,
With foresight works, and does designs pursue.

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Thus all the mighty wits that have essay'd
To explicate the means, how things are made
By Nature's power, without the Hand Divine,
The final causes of effects assign.
They say, that this or that is so or so,
That such events in such succession flow;
Because convenience, decency, and use,
Require that Nature things should thus produce.
They in their demonstrations always vaunt
Efficient causes, which they always want.
But thus they yield the question in debate,
And grant the impotence of Chance and Fate;
For, till they show by what necessity
Things have the disposition which we see,
Whether it be deriv'd from Fate or Chance,
Not the least step in science they advance.
Grant Nature furnish'd, at her vast expense,
One room of state with such magnificence,
That it might shine above the others bright,
Adorn'd with numerous burnish'd balls of light;
Does she on one by decent rules dispense
Of constellations such a wealth immense,
While the next sphere in amplitude and height
Rolls on, with one erratic lonely light?
But be it so, the question's still the same,
Tell us, from what necessity it came?
Let us the great philosopher attend,
While to the worlds below his thoughts descend:
His elements, earth, water, air, and fire,
He says, to make all compound things conspire;
He in the midst leaves the dull earth at rest,
In the soft bosom of the air caress'd:
The red-wing'd fire must to the moon arise,
Hover in air, and lick contiguous skies!

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No charms, no force, can make the fire descend,
Nor can the earth to seats superior tend;
Both unmolested peace for ever own,
This in the middle, that beneath the moon:
Water and air not so; for they, by fate
Assign'd to constant duty, always wait:
Ready by turns to rise or to descend,
Nature against a vacant to defend;
For should a void her monarchy invade,
Should in her works the smallest breach be made;
That breach the mighty fabric would dissolve,
And in immediate ruin all involve.
A consequence so dismal to prevent,
Water and air are still (as said) intent
To mount or fall, this way or that to fly,
Seek subterranean vaults, or climb the sky;
While these with so much duty are oppress'd,
The earth and fire are privileg'd with rest.
These elements, 'tis clear, have not discern'd
The interest of the whole, nor are concern'd
Lest they, when once an interposing void
Has nature's frame o'erturn'd, should be destroy'd.
Tell, why these simple elements are four?
Why just so many? why not less or more?
Does this from pure necessity proceed?
Or say, does Nature just that number need?
If this, you mock us, and decline the task;
You give the final cause, when we the' efficient ask.
If that, how often shall we call in vain,
That you would this necessity explain?
But here forgive me, famous Stagyrite,
If I esteem it idle to recite
The reasons (so you call them) which you give,
To make us this necessity believe;

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Reasons so trifling, so absurd, and dry,
That those should blush, who make a grave reply.
Your elements we grant: but now declare
How you to form compounded things prepare,
And mix your fire, and water, earth and air?
'The swift rotation of the spheres above,
You say, must all inferior bodies move;
The elements in sublunary space
Are by this impulse forc'd to leave their place;
By various agitations they combine
In different forms, by different mixtures join;
Blended and justly temper'd they compound
All things in all the' inferior regions found;
Thus beings from the' incorporated four
Result, by undesigning Nature's power.
Hence metals, plants, and minerals arise,
The clouds and all the meteors of the skies!
Hence all the clans that haunt the hill or wood,
That beat the air, or cut the limpid flood!
Ev'n man, their lord, hence into being came,
Breath'd the pure air, and felt the vital flame!'
Say, is not this a noble scheme, a piece
Worthy the Stagyrite, and worthy Greece?
But now, acute philosopher, declare
How this rotation of the heavenly sphere
Can mingle fire and water, earth and air?
The fire that dwells beneath the lunar-ball,
To meet ascending earth, must downward fall.
Now turn your sphere contiguous to the fire,
Will from its seat that element retire?
The sphere could never drive its neighbour down,
But give a circling motion, like its own.
So give the air impression from above,
It in a whirl vertiginous would move;

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And thus the rolling spheres can ne'er displace
The fire or air, to make a mingled mass;
The elements distinct might keep their seat,
Elude the ruffle, and your scheme defeat.
  But since the' applauded author will demand
For complex bodies no director's hand:
Since art without an artist he maintains,
A building rears without a builder's pains;
He comes at length to Epicurus' scheme,
Pleas'd by his model compound works to frame.
One all his various atoms does unite
To form mix'd things; the famous Stagyrite,
By his invented elements combin'd,
Composes beings of each different kind;
But both agree, while both alike deny
The gods did e'er their care or thought apply
To form or rule this universal frame,
Which or from fate or casual concourse came.
Whether to raise the world you are inclin'd
By this man's chance, or that man's fate, as blind;
If still mechanic, necessary laws
Of moving matter must all beings cause;
If artful works from a brute cause result,
From springs unknown, and qualities occult;
With schemes alike absurd our reason you insult.
  And now, to finish this less pleasant task,
Of our renown'd philosopher we ask,
How was the earth determin'd to its place?
Why did it first the middle point embrace?
What blandishments, what strong attractive power,
What happy arts adapted to allure,
Were by that single point of all the void,
To captivate and charm the mass employ'd?

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Or what machines, what grapples did it cast
On earth, to fix it to the centre fast?
But, if the earth, by strong enchantment caught,
This point of all the vacant fondly sought,
Since it is unintelligent and blind,
Could it the way, the nearest could it find?
When at that point arriv'd, how did it know
It was arrriv'd, and should no further go?
When in a globous form collected there,
What wondrous cement made the parts cohere?
Why did the orb suspended there remain
Fix'd and unmov'd? what does its weight sustain?
Tell what its fall prevents; can liquid air
The ponderous pile on its weak columns bear?
The earth must, in its gravity's despite,
Uphold itself; our careless Stagyrite
For its support has no provision made,
No pillar rear'd, and no foundation laid:
When by occult and unknown gravity
'Tis to its station brought, it there must lie
In undisturb'd repose, in vain we ask him, why?
Say, if the world uncaus'd did ne'er begin,
If nature what it is, has always been;
Why do no arms the poet's song employ
Before the Theban war, or siege of Troy?
And why no elder histories relate
The rise of empires, and the turns of state?
If generations infinite are gone,
Tell, why so late were arts and letters known?
Their rise and progress is of recent date,
And still we mourn their young imperfect state.
If unconfin'd duration we regard,
And time he with eternity compar'd,

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But yesterday the sages of the east
First some crude knowledge of the stars express'd.
In sacred emblems Egypt's sons conceal'd
Their mystic learning, rather than reveal'd.
Greece after this, for subtle wit renown'd,
The sciences and arts improv'd or found;
First, causes search'd, and Nature's secret ways;
First taught the bards to sing immortal lays;
The charms of music and of painting rais'd,
And was for building first, and first for sculpture prais'd.

Man in mechanic arts did late excel,
That succour life, and noxious power repel;
Which yield supplies for necessary use,
Or which to pleasure or to pomp conduce.
How late was found the loadstone's magic force,
That seeks the north, and guides the sailor's course!
How newly did the printer's curious skill
The' enlighten'd world with letter'd volumes fill!
But late the kindled powder did explode
The massy ball, and the brass tube unload;
The tube, to whose loud thunder Albion owes
The laurel honours that adorn her brows;
Which awful, during eight renown'd campaigns,
From Belgia's hills, and Gallia's frontier plains,
Did through the' admiring realms around proclaim
Marlborough's swift conquests, and great Anna's name!

By this the leader of the British powers
Shook Menin, Lilla, and high Ganda's towers;
Next his wide engines level'd Tournay's pride,
Whose lofty walls advancing foes defied:
Though nitrous tempests, and clandestine death,
Fill'd the deep caves and numerous vaults beneath,

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Which, form'd with art, and wrought with endless toil,
Ran through the faithless excavated soil.
See, the intrepid Briton delves his way,
And to the caverns lets in war and day;
Quells subterranean foes, and rises crown'd
With spoils, from martial labour under ground.
Mons, to reward Blarignia's glorious field,
To Marlborough's terrors did submissive yield.
The hero next assail'd proud Doway's head;
And, spite of confluent inundations spread
Around, in spite of works for sure defence
Rais'd with consummate art, and cost immense,
With unexampled valour did succeed:
(Villars, thy host beheld the hardy deed!)
Aria, Venantia, Bethune, and Bouchain,
Of his long triumphs close the' illustrious train.
While thus his thunder did his wrath declare,
And artful lightnings flash'd along the air,
Somona's castles with the' impetuous roar
Astonish'd tremble, but their warriors more;
Lutetia's lofty towers, with terrors struck,
Caught the contagion, and at distance shook.
Tell, Gallic chiefs, for you have often heard
His dreadful cannon, and his fire rever'd,
Tell, how you rag'd, when your pale cohorts run
From Marlborough's sword, the battle scarce begun.
Tell, Scaldis! Legia, tell! how to their head
Your frighted waves in refluent terrors fled.
While Marlborough's cannon thus prevails by land,
Britain's sea-chiefs, by Anna's high command,
Resistless o'er the Tuscan billows ride,
And strike rebellowing caves on either side;

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Their sulphur tempests ring from shore to shore,
Now make the Ligur start, and now the Moor.
Hark how the sound disturbs imperious Rome,
Shakes her proud hills, and rolls from dome to dome!
Her mitred princes hear the echoing noise,
And, Albion! dread thy wrath, and awful voice.
Aided by thee, the Austrian eagles rise
Sublime, and triumph in Iberian skies.
What panic fear, what anguish, what distress,
What consternation, Gallia's sons express,
While trembling on the coast, they from afar
View the wing'd terrors and the floating war!

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BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The fabulous account of the first rise of mankind, given by the ancient poets. The opinions of many of the Greek philosophers concerning that point not less ridiculous. The assertion of Epicurus and his followers, that our first parents were the spontaneous production of the earth, most absurd and incredible. The true origin of man inquired into. He is proved to be at first created by an intelligent, arbitrary cause; from the characters and impressions of contrivance, art, and wisdom, which appear in his formation. The wonderful progress of it. The figure, situation, and connection of the bones. The system of the veins, and that of the arteries. The manner of the circulation of the blood described. Nutrition, how performed. The system of the nerves. Of the animal spirits, how made, and how employed in muscular motion and sensation. A wise, intelligent Cause inferred from these appearances.

The pagan world, to Canaan's realms unknown,
Where knowledge reign'd, and light celestial shone,
Lost by degrees their parent Adam's name,
Forgot their stock, and wonder'd whence they came;
Unguided, in the dark they strove to find,
With fruitless toil, the source of humankind.
  The heathen bards, who idle fables dress'd,
Illusive dreams in mystic verse express'd,
And, foes to natural science and divine,
In beauteous phrase made impious notions shine,

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In strains sublime their different fictions sung,
Whence the first parents of our species sprung.
Prometheus (so some elder poets* say)
Temper'd and form'd a paste of purer clay,
To which, when mingled with the river's stream,
His artful hand gave human shape and frame;
Then, with warm life his figures to inspire,
The bold projector stole celestial fire
While others† tell us how the human brood
Ow'd their production to the fruitful wood;
How from the laurel and the ash they sprung,
And infants on the oak like acorns hung:
The crude conceptions press'd the bending trees,
Till cherish'd by the sun-beams, by degrees,
Ripe children dropp'd on all the soil around,
Peopled the woods, and overspread the ground.
Great Jupiter, (so some‡ were pleas'd to sing)
Of fabled gods the father and the king,
The moving prayer of Æacus did grant,
And into men and women turn'd the ant.
Some§ tell, Deucalion and his Pyrrha threw
Obdurate stones, which o'er their shoulders flew,
Then shifting shape receiv'd a vital flame,
And men and women (wondrous change!) became.
And thus the hard and stubborn race of man
From animated rock and flint began.
Now to the learned schools of Greece repair,
Who Chance the author of the world declare:
Then judge if wise philosophers excel
Those idle tales, which wanton poets tell.

* See Hesiod, Opera et Dies, lib. i.
† See Virgil, Æneid viii. and Juvenal, Sat. vi.
‡ See Ovid, Met. lib. vii. § See Ovid, Met. lib. i.

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They say, 'at first to living things the earth
At her formation gave spontaneous birth;
When youthful heat was through the glebe diffus'd,
Mankind, as well as insects, she produc'd;
That genial wombs by parent Chance were form'd
Adapted to the soil, which, after warm'd
And cherish'd by the sun's enlivening beam,
With human offsprings did in embryo teem;
These nourish'd there, a while imprison'd lay,
Then broke their yielding bands, and forc'd their way;
The field a crop of reasoning creatures crown'd,
And crying infants grovel'd on the ground;
A milky store was by the mother earth
Pour'd from her bosom, to sustain the birth;
In strength and bulk increas'd, the earth-born race
Could move, and walk, and ready change their place,
O'er every hill and verdant pasture stray,
Skip o'er the lawns, and by the rivers play,
Could eat the tender plant, and by degrees
Browse on the shrubs, and crop the budding trees;
The fragrant fruit from bending branches shake,
And with the crystal stream their thirst at pleasure slake.
'The earth by these applauded schools, 'tis said,
This single crop of men and women bred;
Who grown adult (so Chance it seems enjoin'd)
Did male and female propagate their kind.'
This wise account Lucretian sages give,
Whence our first parents their descent derive.
Severely on this subject to dispute,
And tales so wild, so senseless, to confute,
Were with inglorious labour to disgrace
The schools, and reason's dignity debase.

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But since, with this of man's original,
The parts remaining of their scheme must fall,
(Yet further to pursue the present theme)
Behold how vain philosophers may dream.
Grant, Epicurus, that by casual birth
Men sprung spontaneous from the fruitful earth,
When on the glebe the naked infants lay,
How were the helpless creatures fed? You say,
'The teeming soil did from its breasts exude
A soft and milky liquor for their food.'
I will not ask what this apt humour made,
Nor by what wondrous channels 'twas convey'd;
For, if we such inquiries make, we know
Your short reply, 'It happen'd to be so;'
Without assigning once a proper cause,
Or solving questions by mechanic laws,
To every doubt your answer is the same,
'It so fell out, and so by chance it came.'
How shall the new-born race their food command,
Who cannot change their place, or move a hand?
Grant that the glebe beneath will never drink,
Nor through its pores let the soft humour sink;
Will not the sun with his exhaling ray
Defraud the babe, and draw his food away?
Since for so long a space the human birth
Must lie expos'd and naked on the earth;
Say, could the tender creature, in despite
Of heat by day, and chilling dews by night,
In spite of thunder, winds, and hail, and rain,
And all inclement air, its life maintain?
In vain, you say, in earth's primeval state,
'Soft was the air, and mild the cold and heat;'
For did not then the night succeed the day?
The sun, as now, roll through its annual way?

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The' effects then on the air must be the same,
The frosts of winter, and the summer's flame.
'In the first age, you say, the pregnant ground
With human kind in embryo did abound,
And pour'd her offspring on the soil around!'
But tell us, Epicurus, why the field
Did never since one human harvest yield?
And why we never see one ripening birth
Heave in the glebe, and struggle through the earth?
You say, that 'when the earth was fresh and young,
While her prolific energy was strong,
A race of men she in her bosom bred,
And all the fields with infant people spread;
But that first birth her strength did so exhaust,
The genial mother so much vigour lost,
That, wasted now by age, in vain we hope
She should again bring forth a human crop.'
Mean time, she's not with labour so much worn,
But she can still the hills with woods adorn.
See, from her fertile bosom how she pours
Verdant conceptions, and, refresh'd with showers,
Covers the field with corn, and paints the mead with flowers.
See, her tall sons, the cedar, oak, and pine,
The fragrant myrtle, and the juicy vine,
Their parent's undecaying strength declare,
Which with fresh labour, and unwearied care,
Supplies new plants, her losses to repair.
Then, since the earth retains her fruitful power
To procreate plants, the forest to restore;
Say, why to nobler animals alone
Should she be feeble, and unfruitful grown?
After one birth she ceas'd not to be young,
The glebe was succulent, the mould was strong,

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Could she at once fade in her perfect bloom,
Waste all her spirits, and her wealth consume?
  Grant that her vigour might in part decrease,
From like productions must she ever cease?
To form a race she might have still inclin'd,
Though of a monstrous, or a dwarfish kind.
Why did she never, by one crude essay,
Imperfect lines and rudiments display?
In some succeeding ages had been found
A leg or arm unfinish'd in the ground;
And sometimes in the fields might ploughing swains
Turn up soft bones, and break unfashion'd veins.
But grant the earth was lavish of her power,
And spent at once her whole prolific store;
Would not so long a rest new vigour give,
And all her first fertility revive?
Learn, Epicurus, of the' experienc'd swain,
When frequent wounds have worn the' impoverish'd plain:
Let him a while the furrow not molest,
But leave the glebe to heavenly dews and rest;
If then he till and sow the harrow'd field,
Will not the soil a plenteous harvest yield?
  The sun, by you, Lucretius, is assign'd
The other parent of all humankind.
But does he ever languish or decay?
Does he not equal influence display,
And pierce the plains with the same active ray?
If then the glebe, warm'd with the solar flame,
Men once produc'd, it still should be the same.
  You say, 'the sun's prolific beams can form
The' industrious ant, the gaudy fly, and worm;
Can make each plant, and tree, the gardener's care,
Beside their leaves, their proper insects bear:

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Then might the heavens, in some peculiar state,
Or lucky aspect, beasts and men create.'
But late inquirers by their glasses find
That every insect of each different kind,
In its own egg, cheer'd by the solar rays,
Organs involv'd and latent life displays:
This truth, discover'd by sagacious art,
Does all Lucretian arrogance subvert.
Proud wits, your frenzy own, and, overcome
By reason's force, be now for ever dumb.
If, learned Epicurus, we allow
Our race to earth primeval being owe,
How did she male and female sexes frame?
Say, if from fortune this distinction came?
Or did the conscious parent then foresee
By one conception she should barren be,
And therefore, wisely provident, design'd
Prolific pairs to propagate the kind;
That, thus preserv'd, the godlike race of man
Might not expire ere yet it scarce began?
Since, by these various arguments, 'tis clear
The teeming mould did not our parents bear;
By more severe inquiries, let us trace
The origin and source of human race.
I think, I move, I therefore know I am;
While I have been, I still have been the same,
Since, from an infant, I a man became.
But though I am, few circling years are gone,
Since I in nature's roll was quite unknown.
Then, since 'tis plain I have not always been,
I ask, from whence my being could begin?
I did not to myself existence give,
Nor from myself the secret power receive,
By which I reason, and by which I live.

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I did not build this frame, nor do I know
The hidden springs from whence my motions flow.
If I had form'd myself, I had design'd
A stronger body, and a wiser mind,
From sorrow free, nor liable to pain;
My passions should obey, and reason reign.
Nor could my being from my parents flow,
Who neither did the parts or structure know,
Did not my mind or body understand,
My sex determine, nor my shape command:
Had they design'd and rais'd the curious frame,
Inspir'd my branching veins with vital flame,
Fashion'd the heart, and hollow channels made,
Through which the circling streams of life are play'd;
Had they the organs of my senses wrought,
And form'd the wondrous principle of thought;
Their artful work they must have better known,
Explain'd its springs, and its contrivance shown.
If they could make, they might preserve me too,
Prevent my fears, or dissipate my woe.
When long in sickness languishing I lay,
They, with compassion touch'd, did mourn and pray;
To soothe my pain, and mitigate my grief,
They said kind things, yet brought me no relief.
But whatsoever cause my being gave,
The Power that made me, can its creature save.
If to myself I did not being give,
Nor from immediate parents did receive;
It could not from my predecessors flow,
They, than my parents, could not more bestow.
Should we the long depending scale ascend
Of sons and fathers, will it never end?
If 'twill, then must we through the order run
To some one man, whose being ne'er begun:

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If that one man was sempiternal, why
Did he, since independent, ever die?
If from himself his own existence came,
The cause, that could destroy his being, name.
To seek my maker, thus in vain I trace
The whole successive chain of human race,
Bewilder'd I my author cannot find,
Till some First Cause, some Self-existent Mind,
Who form'd, and rules all nature, is assign'd.
When first the womb did the crude embryo hold,
What shap'd the parts? what did the limbs unfold?
O'er the whole work in secret did preside,
Give quickening vigour, and each motion guide?
What kindled in the dark the vital flame,
And, ere the heart was form'd, push'd on the reddening stream?
Then for the heart the aptest fibres strung;
And in the breast the' impulsive engine hung?
Say, what the various bones so wisely wrought?
How was their frame to such perfection brought?
What did their figures for their uses fit,
Their number fix, and joints adapted knit;
And made them all in that just order stand,
Which motion, strength, and ornament, demand?
What for the sinews spun so strong a thread,
The curious loom to weave the muscles spread;
Did the nice strings of tended membranes drill,
And perforate the nerve with so much skill,
Then with the active stream the dark recesses fill?
The purple mazes of the veins display'd,
And all the' arterial pipes in order laid,
What gave the bounding current to the blood,
And to and fro convey'd the restless flood?

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The living fabric now in pieces take,
Of every part due observation make;
All which such art discover, so conduce
To beauty, vigour, and each destin'd use;
The atheist, if to search for truth inclin'd,
May in himself his full conviction find,
And from his body teach his erring mind.

When the crude embryo careful Nature breeds,
See how she works, and how her work proceeds;
While through the mass her energy she darts,
To free and swell the complicated parts,
Which only does unravel and untwist
The' envelop'd limbs, that previous there exist.
And as each vital speck, in which remains
The' entire, but rumpled animal, contains
Organs perplex'd, and clues of twining veins;
So every fœtus bears a sacred hoard,
With sleeping, unexpanded issue stor'd;
Which numerous, but unquicken'd progeny,
Clasp'd and inwrapt within each other lie:
Engendering heats these one by one unbind,
Stretch their small tubes, and hamper'd nerves unwind:
And thus, when time shall drain each magazine,
Crowded with men unborn, unripe, unseen,
Nor yet of parts unfolded; no increase
Can follow, all prolific power must cease.

The' elastic spirits, which remain at rest
In the straight lodgings of the brain compress'd,
While by the ambient womb's enlivening heat,
Cheer'd and awaken'd, first themselves dilate;
Then quciken'd and expanded every way,
The genial labourers all their force display:

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They now begin to work the wondrous frame,
To shape the parts, and raise the vital flame;
For when the' extended fibres of the brain
Their active guests no longer can restrain,
They backward spring, which due effort compels
The labouring spirits to forsake their cells;
The spirits thus exploded from their seat,
Swift from the head to the next parts retreat
Force their admission, and their passage beat:
Their tours around the' unopen'd mass they take,
And by a thousand ways their inroads make,
Till there resisted they their race inflect,
And backward to their source their way direct.
Thus, with a steady and alternate toil,
They issue from, and to the head recoil;
By which their plastic function they discharge,
Extend their channels, and their tracts enlarge;
For, by the swift excursions which they make,
Still sallying from the brain, and leaping back,
They pierce the nervous fibre, bore the vein,
And stretch the' arterial channels which contain
The various streams of life, that to and fro
Through dark meanders undirected flow;
The' inspected egg this gradual change betrays,
To which the brooding hen expanding heat conveys.
The beating heart, demanded first for use,
Is the first muscle nature does produce;
By this impulsive engine's constant aid,
The tepid floods are every way convey'd:
And did not nature's care at first provide
The active heart, to push the circling tide,
All progress to her work would be denied.
The salient point, so first is call'd the heart,
Shap'd and suspended with amazing art,

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By turns dilated, and by turns compress'd,
Expels and entertains the purple guest;
It sends from out its left contracted side
Into the' arterial tube its vital pride;
Which tube, prolong'd but little from its source,
Parts its wide trunk, and takes a double course.
One channel to the head its way directs,
One to the inferior limbs its path inflects:
Both smaller by degrees, and smaller grow,
And on the parts, through which they branching go,
A thousand secret subtle pipes bestow;
From which, by numerous convolutions wound,
Wrapt with the attending nerve, and twisted round,
The complicated knots and kernels rise,
Of various figures, and of various size.
The' arterial ducts, when thus involv'd, produce
Unnumber'd glands, and of important use;
But after, as they farther progress make,
The appellation of a vein they take;
For though the' arterial pipes themselves extend
In smallest branches, yet they never end:
The same continued circling channels run
Back to the heart, where first their course begun.
The heart, as said, from its contractive cave,
On the left side, ejects the bounding wave;
Exploded thus, as splitting channels lead,
Upward it springs, or downward is convey'd;
The crimson jets with force elastic thrown
Ascend, and climb the mind's imperial throne;
Arterial streams through the soft brain diffuse,
And water all its fields with vital dews;
From this o'erflowing tide the curious brain
Does through its pores the purer spirits strain;

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Which to its inmost seats their passage make,
Whence their dark rise the' extended sinews take;
With all their mouths the nerves these spirits drink,
Which through the cells of the fine strainer sink;
These all the channel'd fibres every way
For motion and sensation still convey.
The greatest portion of the' arterial blood,
By the close structure of the parts withstood,
Whose narrow meshes stop the grosser flood,
By apt canals and furrows in the brain,
Which here discharge the office of a vein,
Invert their current, and the heart regain.
The shooting streams, which through another road
The beating engine downward did explode,
To all the' inferior parts descend, and lave
The members with their circulating wave:
To make the' arterial treasure move as slow,
As nature's ends demand, the channels grow
Still more contracted, as they further go:
Besides, the glands, which o'er the body spread
Fine complicated clues of nervous thread,
Involv'd, and twisted with the' arterial duct,
The rapid motion of the blood obstruct:
These labyrinths the circling current stay
For noble ends, which after we display.
Soon as the blood has pass'd the winding ways,
And various turnings of the wondrous maze,
From the entangled knot of vessels freed,
It runs its vital race with greater speed;
And from the parts and members most remote,
By these canals the streams are backward brought,
Which are of thinner coats and fewer fibres wrought;

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Till all the confluent rills their current join,
And in the ample porta-vein combine.
This larger channel by a thousand roads
Enters the liver, and its store unloads;
Which from that store by proper inlets strains
The yellow dregs, and sends them by the veins
To the larger cistern, which the gall contains;
Then to the vein we *cava* name, the blood
Calls in the scatter'd streams, and re-collects the flood.
As when the Thames advances through the plain,
With his fresh waters to dilute the main;
He turns and winds amidst the flowery meads,
And now contracts, and now his water spreads;
Here in a course direct he forward tends,
There to his head his waves retorted bends:
See, now the sportive flood in two divides
His silver train, now with uniting tides
He wanton clasps the intercepted soil,
And forms with erring streams the reedy isle;
At length collecting all his watery band,
The ocean to augment, he leaves the land.
So the red currents in their secret maze
In various rounds through dark meanders pass,
Till all assembled in the *cava* vein,
Bring to the heart's right side their crimson train,
Which now compress'd with force elastic drives
The flood, that through the secret passes strives;
The road that to the lungs this store transmits
Into unnumber'd narrow channels splits;
The venal blood crowds through the winding ways,
And through the tubes the broken tide conveys
Those numerous streams, their rosy beauty gone,
Poor by expense, and faint with labour grown,

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Are in the lungs enrich'd, which reinspire
The languid liquors, and restore their fire.
The large arterial ducts that thither lead,
By which the blood is from the heart convey'd
Through either lobe ten thousand branches spread.
Here its bright stream the bounding current parts,
And through the various passes swiftly darts,
Each subtile pipe, each winding channel, fills
With sprightly liquors, and with purple rills;
The pipe, distinguish'd by its grisly rings,
To cherish life aërial pasture brings,
Which the soft breathing lungs with gentle force
Constant embrace by turns, by turns divorce;
The springy air this nitrous food impels
Through all the spungy parts and bladder'd cells,
And with dilating breath the vital billows swells;
The' admitted nitre agitates the flood,
Revives its fire, and re-ferments the blood.
Behold, the streams now change their languid blue,
Regain their glory, and their flame renew;
With scarlet honours re-adorn'd, the tide
Leaps on, and, bright with more than Tyrian pride,
Advances to the heart, and fills the cave
On the left side, which the first motion gave;
Now through the same involv'd arterial ways,
Again the' exploded jets the' impulsive engine plays.
No sons of wisdom could this current trace,
Or of the' Ionic, or Italic race:
From thee, Democritus, it lay conceal'd,
Though yielding nature much to thee reveal'd:
Though with the curious knife thou didst invade
Her dark recesses, and hast oft display'd

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The crimson mazes, and the hollow road,
Which to the heart conveys the refluent blood.
It was to thee, great Stagyrite, unknown,
And thy preceptor* of divine renown.
Learning did ne'er this secret truth impart
To the Greek masters of the healing art.
'Twas by the Coan's† piercing eye unview'd,
And did attentive Galen's search elude.
Thou, wondrous Harvey! whose immortal fame,
By thee instructed, grateful schools proclaim;
Thou, Albion's pride! didst first the winding way,
And circling life's dark labyrinth display‡;
Attentive from the heart thou didst pursue
The starting flood, and keep it still in view;
Till thou with rapture saw'st the channels bring
The purple currents back, and form the vital ring.
See, how the human animal is fed,
How nourishment is wrought, and how convey'd:
The mouth, with proper faculties endued,
First entertains, and then divides the food;
Two adverse rows of teeth the meat prepare,
On which the glands fermenting juice confer;
Nature has various tender muscles plac'd,
By which the artful gullet is embrac'd;
Some the long funnel's curious mouth extend,
Through which ingested meats with ease descend;
Other confederate pairs for nature's use
Contract the fibres, and the twitch produce,
Which gently pushes on the grateful food
To the wide stomach, by its hollow road:

* Plato. † Hipprocrates.

‡ Dr. Harvey published his doctrine of the circulation of the blood in 1628, and lived to see it universally received.

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That this long road may unobstructed go,
As it descends, it bores the midriff through;
The large receivier for concoction made
Behold amidst the warmest bowels laid;
The spleen to this, and to the adverse side
The glowing liver's comfort is applied;
Beneath, the pancreas has its proper seat,
To cheer its neighbour, and augment its heat;
More to assist it for its destin'd use,
This ample bag is stor'd with active juice.
Which can with ease subdue, with ease unbind,
Admitted meats of every different kind;
This powerful ferment, mingling with the parts,
The leaven'd mass to milky chyle converts;
The stomach's fibres this concocted food,
By their contraction's gentle force, exclude,
Which by the mouth on the right side descends
Through the wide pass, which from that mouth depends;
In its progression soon the labour'd chyle
Receives the confluent rills of bitter bile,
Which by the liver sever'd from the blood,
And striving through the gall-pipe, here unload
Their yellow streams, more to refine the flood;
The complicated glands, in various ranks
Dispos'd along the neighbouring channel's banks,
By constant weeping mix their watery store
With the chyle's current, and dilute it more;
The' intestine roads, inflected and inclin'd,
In various convolutions turn and wind,
That these meanders may the progress stay,
And the descending chyle by this delay
May through the milky vessels find its way.

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Whose little mouths in the large channel's side
Suck in the flood, and drink the cheering tide:
These numerous veins (such is the curious frame!)
Receive the pure insinuating stream:
But no corrupt or dreggy parts admit,
To form the blood, or feed the limbs unfit;
The' intestine spiral fibres these protrude,
And from the winding tubes at length exclude.
Observe, these small canals conspire to make
With all their treasure one capacious lake,
Whose common receptacle entertains
The' united streams of all the lacteal veins.
Hither the rills of water are convey'd
In curious aqueducts by nature laid,
To carry all the limpid humour strain'd,
And from the blood divided by the gland;
Which mingling currents with the milky juice
Makes it more apt to flow, more fit for use;
These liquors, which the wide receiver fill,
Prepar'd with labour, and refin'd with skill,
Another course to distant parts begin,
Through roads that stretch along the back within;
This useful channel, lately known, ascends,
And in the vein near the left shoulder ends,
Which there unloads its wealth, that with the blood
Now flows in one incorporated flood;
Soon by the vein 'tis to the heart convey'd,
And is by that elastic engine play'd
Into the lungs, whence, as describ'd before,
It onward springs, and makes the wondrous tour.
Now all the banks the branching river laves
With dancing streams, and animated waves;
New florid honours and gay youth bestows,
Diffusing vital vigour where it flows!

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Supplies fresh spirits to the living frame,
And kindles in the eyes a brighter flame;
Muscles impair'd receive new fibrous thread,
And every bone is with rich marrow fed;
Nature revives, cheer'd with the wealthy tide,
And life regal'd displays its purple pride.
  But how the wondrous distribution's made,
How to each part its proper food convey'd;
How fibrous strings for nourishment are wrought,
By what conveyance to the muscles brought;
How rang'd for motion, how for beauty mix'd;
With vital cement how the' extremes are fix'd;
How they agree in various ways to join
In a transverse, a straight, and crooked line;
Here lost in wonder we adoring stand!
With rapture own the wise Director's hand,
Who Nature made, and does her works command.
  Let us howe'er the theme as far pursue,
As learn'd observers know, or think they do.
  Mix'd with the blood in the same circling tide,
The rills nutritious through the vessels glide:
Those pipes, still lessening as they further pass,
Retard the progress of the flowing mass.
The glands, that nature o'er the body spreads,
All artful knots of various hollow threads,
Which lymphæ ducts, on artery, nerve, and vein,
Involv'd and close together wound, contain,
Make yet the motion of the streams more slow,
Which through those mazes intricate must flow:
And hence it comes, the interrupted blood
Distends its channels with its swelling flood;
Those channels, turgid with the' obstructive tide,
Stretch their small holes, and make their meshes [wide,
By skilful nature pierc'd on every side.

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Mean time, the labour'd chyle pervades the pores
In all the' arterial perforated shores;
The liguid food, which through those passes strives,
To every part just reparation gives;
Through holes of various figures various juice
Insinuates, to serve for nature's use.
See softer fibres to the flesh are sent,
While the thin membrane finer strings augment;
The tough and strong are on the sinews laid,
And to the bones the harder are convey'd,
But what the mass nutritious does divide,
To different parts the different portions guide,
What makes them aptly to the limbs adhere,
In youth augment them, and in age repair,
The deepest search could never yet declare.
Nor less contrivance, nor less curious art,
Surprise and please in every other part.
See, how the nerves, with equal wisdom made,
Arising from the tender brain, pervade,
And secret pass in pairs, the channel'd bone,
And thence advance through paths and roads un-
Form'd of the finest complicated thread, [known;
These numerous cords are through the body spread;
A thousand branches from each trunk they send,
Some to the limbs, some to the bowels tend;
Some in straight lines, some in transverse, are found,
One forms a crooked figure, one a round;
The entrails these embrace in spiral strings,
Those clasp the' arterial tubes in tender rings;
The tendons some compacted close produce,
And some thin fibres for the skin diffuse.
These subtle channels (such is every nerve!)
For vital functions, sense, and motion serve;
Included spirits through their secret road
Pass to and fro, as through the veins the blood;

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Some to the heart advancing take their way,
Which move and make the beating muscle play;
Part to the spleen, part to the liver, flows,
These to the lungs, and to the stomach those;
They help to labour and concoct the food,
Refine the chyle, and animate the blood;
Exalt the ferments, and the strainers aid,
That, by a constant separation made,
They may a due economy maintain,
Exclude the noxious parts, the good retain.
  Yet we these wondrous functions ne'er perceive,
Functions, by which we move, by which we live;
Unconscious we these motions never heed,
Whether they err, or by just laws proceed.
  But other spirits, govern'd by the will,
Shoot through their tracks, and distant muscles fill:
This Sovereign by his arbitrary nod
Restrains, or sends his ministers abroad;
Swift and obedient to his high command,
They stir a finger, or they lift a hand;
They tune our voices, or they move our eyes;
By these we walk, or from the ground arise;
By these we turn, by these the body bend;
Contract a limb at pleasure, or extend.
And though these spirits, which obsequious go,
Know not the paths through which they ready flow,
Nor can our mind instruct them in their way,
Of all their roads as ignorant as they;
Yet seldom erring, they attain their end,
And reach that single part, which we intend;
Unguided they a just distinction make,
This muscle swell, and leave the other slack;
And when their force this limb or that inflects,
Our will the measure of that force directs!

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The spirits which distend them, as we please,
Exert their power, or from their duty cease.
  These out-guards of the mind are sent abroad,
And still patrolling beat the neighbouring road;
Or to the parts remote obedient fly,
Keep posts advanc'd, and on the frontier lie.
The watchful centinels at every gate,
At every passage, to the senses wait;
Still travel to and fro the nervous way,
And their impressions to the brain convey.
Where their report the vital envoys make,
And with new orders are remanded back;
Quick, as a darted beam of light, they go,
Through different paths to different organs flow,
Whence they reflect as swiftly to the brain,
To give it pleasure, or to give to it pain.
  Thus has the muse a daring wing display'd,
Through trackless skies ambitious flight essay'd,
To sing the wonders of the human frame;
But, oh! bewails her weak, unequal flame.
Ye skilful masters of Machaon's race,
Who nature's mazy intricacies trace,
And to sublimer spheres of knowledge rise
By manag'd fire, and late-invented eyes;
Tell, how your search has here eluded been,
How oft amaz'd and ravish'd you have seen
The conduct, prudence, and stupendous art,
And master-strokes in each mechanic part.
Tell, what delightful mysteries remain
Unsung, which my inferior voice disdain.
  Who can this field of miracles survey?
And not with Galen all in rapture say—
Behold a God, adore him, and obey!

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BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The introduction, in imitation of King Solomon's ironical concessions to the libertine. The Creator asserted, from the contemplation of animals. Of their sense of hearing, tasting, smelling, and especially of seeing. Of the nobler operations of animals, commonly called instincts. The Creator demonstrated farther, from the contemplation of human understanding, and the perfections of the mind. The vigour and swiftness of thought. Simple perception. Reflection. Of the mind's power of abstracting, uniting, and separating ideas. Of the faculty of reasoning, or deducing one proposition from two others. The power of human understanding, in inventing skilful works, and in other instances. The mind's self-determining power, or freedom of choice. Her power of electing an end, and choosing means to attain that end. Of controlling our appetites, rejecting pleasures, and choosing pain, want, and death itself, in hopes of happiness in a distant unknown state of life. The conclusion: being a short recapitulation of the whole; with a hymn to the Creator of the world.

WHILE rosy youth in perfect bloom maintains,
Thoughtless of age, and ignorant of pains;
While from the heart rich streams with vigour spring,
Bound through their roads, and dance their vital ring;
And spirits, swift as sun-beams through the skies,
Dart through thy nerves, and sparkle in thy eyes;

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While nature with full strength thy sinews arms,
Glows in thy cheeks, and triumphs in her charms;
Indulge thy instincts, and intent on ease
With ravishing delight thy senses please.
Since no black clouds dishonour now the sky,
No winds, but balmy genial zephyrs, fly;
Eager embark, and to the' inviting gale
Thy pendants loose, and spread thy silken sail;
Sportive advance, on pleasure's wanton tide,
Through flowery scenes, diffus'd on either side.
See how the hours their painted wings display,
And draw, like harness'd doves, the smiling day!
Shall this glad spring, when active ferments climb,
These months, the fairest progeny of time,
The brightest parts in all duration's train,
Ask thee to seize thy bliss, and ask in vain?
To their prevailing smiles thy heart resign,
And wisely make the proffer'd blessings thine.
Near some fair river, on reclining land,
Midst groves and fountains let thy palace stand;
Let Parian walls unrivall'd pomp display,
And gilded towers repel augmented day;
Let porphyry pillars in high rows uphold
The azure roof, enrich'd with veins of gold;
And the fair creatures of the sculptor's art
Part grace thy palace, and thy garden part;
Here let the scentful spoils of opening flowers
Breathe from thy citron walks and jasmine bowers;
Hesperian blossoms in thy bosom smell;
Let all Arabia in thy garments dwell.
That costly banquets and delicious feasts
May crown thy table, to regale thy guests,
Ransack the hills, and every park and wood,
The lake unpeople, and despoil the flood;

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Procure each feather'd luxury, that beats
Its native air, or from its clime retreats,
And by alternate transmigration flies
O'er interposing seas, and changes skies;
Let artful cooks to raise their relish strive,
With all the spicy tastes the Indies give.
While wreaths of roses round thy temples twine,
Enjoy the sparkling blessings of the vine;
Let the warm nectar all thy veins inspire,
Solace thy heart, and raise the vital fire.
Next let the charms of heavenly music cheer
Thy soul with rapture listening in thy ear;
Let tuneful chiefs exert their skill, to show
What artful joys from manag'd sound can flow;
Now hear the melting voice and trembling string;
Let Pepusch touch the lyre, and Margarita sing.*
While wanton ferments swell thy glowing veins,
To the warm passion give the slacken'd reins;
Thy gazing eyes with blooming beauty feast,
Receive its dart, and hug it in thy breast;
From fair to fair with gay inconstance rove,
Taste every sweet, and cloy thy soul with love.
But midst thy boundless joys, unbridled youth!
Remember still this sad, but certain truth,
That thou at last severely must account;
To what will thy congested guilt amount!
Allow a God; he must our deeds regard;
A righteous Judge must punish and reward:
Yet that he rears no high tribunal here,
Impartial justice to dispense, is clear.

* Francesca Margarita de L'Epine, a native of Tuscany, and a celebrated opera singer, after retiring with a fortune of 10,000*l.* married Dr. Pepusch, the learned composer.

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His sword unpunish'd criminals defy,
Nor by his thunder does the tyrant die;
While Heaven's adorers, press'd with want and pain,
Their unrewarded innocence maintain,
See his right hand he unextended keeps,
Though long provok'd, the' unactive vengeance sleeps.

Hence we a world succeeding this infer,
Where he his justice will assert; prepare
To stand arraign'd before his awful bar.
Where wilt thou hide thy ignominious head?
Shuddering with horror, what hast thou to plead?
Despairing wretch! he'll frown thee from his throne,
And by his wrath will make his being known.

Yet more Religion's empire to support,
To push the foe, and make our last effort;
Let beings with attention be review'd,
Which, not alone with vital power endued,
Can move themselves, can organiz'd perceive
The various strokes which various objects give.
By laws mechanic can Lucretius tell
How living creatures see, or hear, or smell?
How is the image to the sense convey'd?
On the tun'd organs how the impulse made?
How, and by which more noble part, the brain
Perceives th' idea, can their schools explain?
'Tis clear, in that superior seat alone
The judge of objects has her secret throne;
Since, a limb sever'd by the wounding steel,
We still may pain, as in that member, feel.

Mark how the spirits watchful in the ear
Seize undulating sounds, and catch the vocal air,
Observe how others, that the tongue possess,
Which salts of various shape and size impress,

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From their affected fibres upward dart,
And different tastes by different strokes impart.
Remark, how those, which in the nostril dwell,
That artful organ destin'd for the smell,
By vapours mov'd, their passage upward take,
And scents unpleasant or delightful make.
If in the tongue, the nostril, and the ear,
No skill, no wisdom, no design appear;
Lucretians! next regard the curious eye;
Can you no art, no prudence, there descry?
By your mechanic principles, in vain
The sense of sight you labour to explain.
You say, from all the objects of the eye
Thin colour'd shapes uninterrupted fly:
As wandering ghosts (so ancient poets feign)
Skim through the air, and sweep the' infernal plain,
So these light figures roam by day and night,
But undiscover'd till betray'd by light.
But can corporeal forms with so much ease
Meet in their flight a thousand images,
And yet no conflict, no collisive force,
Break their thin texture, and disturb their course?
What fix'd their parts, and made them so cohere,
That they the picture of the object wear?
What is the shape, that from a body flies?
What moves, what propagates, what multiplies,
And paints one image in a thousand eyes?
When to the eye the crowding figures pass,
How in a point can all possess a place,
And lie distinguish'd in such narrow space?
Since all perception in the brain is made,
(Though where and how was never yet display'd)
And since so great a distance lies between
The eye-ball, and the seat of sense within;

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While in the eye the' arrested object stays,
Tell, what the' idea to the brain conveys?
You say, the spirits in the optic nerve,
Mov'd by the intercepted image, serve
To bear the' impression to the brain, and give
The stroke by which the object we perceive.
How does the brain, touch'd with a different stroke,
The whale distinguish from the marble rock?
Pronounce this tree a cedar, that an oak?
Can spirits weak, or stronger blows express,
One body greater, and another less?
How do they make us space and distance know?
At once distinct a thousand objects show?
Lucretians! now proceed; contemplate all
The nobler actions of the animal,
Which instinct some, some lower reason, call,
Say, what contexture did by chance arrive,
Which to brute creatures did that instinct give,
Whence they at sight discern and dread their foe,
Their food distinguish, and their physic know?
By which the lion learns to hunt his prey,
And the weak herd to fear and fly away?
The birds contrive inimitable nests?
And dens are haunted by the forest-beasts?
Whence some in subterranean dwellings hide,
These in the rocks, and those in woods abide?
Whence timorous beasts, through hills and lawns pursued,
By artful shifts the ravening foe elude?
What various wonders may obervers see
In a small insect, the sagacious bee!
Mark, how the little untaught builders square
Their rooms, and in the dark their lodgings rear!

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Nature's mechanics, they unwearied strive,
And fill with curious labyrinths the hive.
See, what bright strokes of architecture shine
Through the whole frame, what beauty, what design!
Each odoriferous cell, and waxen tower,
The yellow pillage of the rifled flower,
Has twice three sides, the only figure fit
To which the labourers may their stores commit,
Without the loss of matter, or of room,
In all the wondrous structure of the comb.
Next view, spectator, with admiring eyes,
In what just order all the' apartments rise:
So regular their equal sides cohere,
The' adapted angles so each other bear,
That, by mechanic rules refin'd and bold,
They are at once upheld, at once uphold.
Does not this skill ev'n vie with reason's reach?
Can Euclid more, can more Palladio, teach?
Each verdant hill the' industrious chemists climb,
Extract the riches of the blooming thyme,
And, provident of winter long before, [store;
They stock their caves, and hoard their flowery
In peace they rule their state with prudent care,
Wisely defend, or wage offensive war.
Maro, these wonders offer'd to his thought,
Felt his known ardour, and the rapture caught:
Then rais'd his voice, and, in immortal lays,
Did high as heaven the insect-nation raise.*

If, Epicurus, this whole artful frame
Does not a wise Creator's hand proclaim,
To view the intellectual world advance;
Is this the creature too of fate or chance?

* See the Georgics, book iv.

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Turn on itself thy godlike reason's ray,
Thy mind contemplate, and its powers survey.
  What high perfections grace the human mind,
In flesh imprison'd, and to earth confin'd!
What vigour has she! what a piercing sight!
Strong as the winds, and sprightly as the light!
She moves unwearied as the active fire,
And, like the flame, her flights to heaven aspire:
By day, her thoughts in never ceasing streams
Flow clear; by night, they strive in troubled dreams.
She draws ten thousand landscapes in the brain,
Dresses of airy forms an endless train,
Which all her intellectual scenes prepare,
Enter by turns the stage, and disappear.
To the remoter regions of the sky
Her swift-wing'd thought can in a moment fly;
Climb to the heights of Heaven to be employ'd
In viewing thence the' interminable void;
Can look beyond the stream of time, to see
The stagnant ocean of eternity.
Thoughts in an instant through the zodiac run,
A year's long journey for the labouring sun;
Then down they shoot, as swift as darting light,
Nor can opposing clouds retard their flight;
Through subterrranean vaults with ease they sweep,
And search the hidden wonders of the deep.
  When man with reason dignified is born,
No images his naked mind adorn;
No sciences or arts enrich his brain,
Nor fancy yet displays her pictur'd train:
He no innate ideas can discern,
Of knowledge destitute, though apt to learn.
Our intellectual, like the body's eye,
Whilst in the womb, no object can descry;

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Yet is dispos'd to entertain the light,
And judge of things when offer'd to the sight.
When objects through the senses passage gain,
And fill with various imagery the brain,
The' ideas, which the mind does thence perceive,
To think, and know, the first occasion give.
Did she not use the senses' ministry,
Nor ever taste, or smell, or hear, or see,
Could she possess'd of power perceptive be?
Wretches, who sightless into being came,
Of light or colour no idea frame.
Then grant a man his being did commence,
Denied by Nature each external sense,
These ports unopen'd, diffident we guess,
The' unconscious soul no image could possess;
Though what in such a state the restless train
Of spirits would produce, we ask in vain.
The mind proceeds, and to reflection goes,
Perceives she does perceive, and knows she knows;
Reviews her acts, and does from thence conclude
She is with reason and with choice endued.
From individuals of distinguish'd kind,
By her abstracting faculty, the mind
Precisely general natures can conceive,
And birth to notions universal give;
The various modes of things distinctly shows
A pure respect, a nice relation knows,
And sees whence each respect and each relation flows;
By her abstracting power in pieces takes
The mix'd and compound whole, which Nature makes;
On objects of the senses she refines,
Beings by Nature separated joins,
And severs qualities which that combines.

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The mind, from things repugnant, some respects
In which their natures are alike selects,
And can some difference and unlikeness see
In things which seem entirely to agree:
She does distinguish here, and there unite;
The mark of judgment that, and this of wit.
As she can reckon, separate, and compare,
Conceive what order, rude, proportion, are,
So from one thought she still can more infer;
Maxim from maxim can by force express,
And make discover'd truths associate truths confess:
On plain foundations, which our reason lays,
She can stupendous frames of science raise;
Notion on notion built will towering rise,
Till the' intellectual fabrics reach the skies;
The mathematic axioms, which appear
By scientific demonstration clear,
The master-builders on two pillars rear:
From two plain problems by laborious thought
Is all the wondrous superstructure wrought.

The soul, as mention'd, can herself inspect,
By acts reflex can view her acts direct;
A task too hard for sense; for though the eye
Its own reflected image can descry,
Yet it ne'er saw the sight by which it sees,
Vision can show no colour'd images.

The mind's tribunal can reports reject
Made by the senses, and their faults correct;
The magnitude of distant stars it knows,
Which erring sense, as twinkling tapers, shows:
Crooked the shape our cheated eye believes,
Which through a double medium it receives;
Superior mind does a right judgment make,
Declares its straight, and mends the eye's mistake.

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Where dwells this sovereign arbitrary soul,
Which does the human animal control,
Inform each part, and agitate the whole?
O'er ministerial senses does preside,
To all their various provinces divide,
Each member move, and every motion guide?
Which, by her secret uncontested nod,
Her messengers, the spirits send abroad
Through every nervous pass, and every vital road,
To fetch from every distant part a train
Of outward objects, to enrich the brain?
Where sits this bright intelligence enthron'd,
With numberless ideas pour'd around?
Where sciences and arts in order wait,
And truths divine compose her godlike state?
Can the dissecting steel the brain display,
And the august apartment open lay,
Where this great queen still chooses to reside
In intellectual pomp, and bright ideal pride?
Or can the eye, assisted by the glass,
Discern the strait, but hospitable place,
In which ten thousand images remain,
Without confusion, and their rank maintain?
How does this wondrous principle of thought
Perceive the object by the senses brought?
What philosophic builder will essay
By rules mechanic to unfold the way
How a machine must be dispos'd to think,
Ideas how to frame, and how to link?
Tell us, Lucretius, Epicurus, tell,
And you in wit unrival'd shall excel;
How through the outward sense the object flies,
How in the soul her images arise;

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What thinking, what perception is, explain;
What all the airy creatures of the brain;
How to the mind a thought reflected goes,
And how the conscious engine knows it knows.
  The mind a thousand skilful works can frame,
Can form deep projects to procure her aim.
Merchants for eastern pearl and golden ore
To cross the main, and reach the Indian shore,
Prepare the floating ship, and spread the sail,
To catch the impulse of the breathing gale.
Warriors in framing schemes their wisdom show,
To disappoint or circumvent the foe.
The' ambitious statesman labours dark designs,
Now open force employs, now undermines;
By paths direct his end he now pursues,
By side approaches now, and slanting views.
  See, how resistless orators persuade,
Draw out their forces, and the heart invade;
Touch every spring and movement of the soul,
This appetite excite, and that control;
Their powerful voice can flying troops arrest,
Confirm the weak, and melt the' obdurate breast;
Chase from the sad their melancholy air,
Soothe discontent, and solace anxious care.
When threatening tides of rage and anger rise,
Usurp the throne, and reason's sway despise;
When in the seats of life this tempest reigns,
Beats through the heart, and drives along the veins;
See, eloquence with force persuasive binds
The restless waves, and charms the warring winds,
Resistless bids tumultuous uproar cease,
Recalls the calm, and gives the bosom peace.
  Did not the mind, on heavenly joy intent,
The various kinds of harmony invent?

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She the theorbo, she the viol found,
And all the moving melody of sound;
She gave to breathing tubes a power unknown,
To speak inspir'd with accents not their own;
Taught tuneful sons of music how to sing,
How, by vibrations of the' extended string,
And manag'd impulse on the suffering air,
To' extort the rapture, and delight the ear.
  See, how celestial reason does command
The ready pencil in the painter's hand;
Whose strokes affect with Natures self to vie,
And with false life amuse the doubtful eye:
Behold the strong emotions of the mind
Exerted in the eyes, and in the face design'd.
Such as the artist's wondrous power, that we
Ev'n pictur'd souls and colour'd passions see,
Where without words (peculiar eloquence)
The busy figures speak their various sense.
What living face does more distress or woe,
More finish'd shame, confusion, horror, know,
Than what the masters of the pencil show?
  Meantime, the chisel with the pencil vies;
The sister-arts dispute the doubtful prize.
Are human limbs, ev'n in their vital state,
More just and strong, more free and delicate,
Than Buonarota's* curious tools create?
He to the rock can vital instincts give,
Which, thus transform'd, can rage, rejoice, or grieve:
His skilful hand does marble veins inspire,
Now with the lover's, now the hero's fire;

* Michael Angelo Buonaroti, the most famous Italian sculptors.

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So well the' imagin'd actors play their part,
The silent hypocrites such power exert,
That passions, which they feel not, they bestow,
Affright us with their fear, and melt us with their woe.
There Niobe leans weeping on her arm:
How her sad looks and beauteous sorrow charm!
See here a Venus soft in Parian stone;
A Pallas there to ancient fables known;
That from the rock arose, not from the main,
This not from Jove's, but from the sculptor's brain.
Admire the carver's fertile energy,
With ravish'd eyes his happy offspring see.
What beauteous figures by the unrivall'd art
Of British Gibbons* from the cedar start!
He makes that tree unnative charms assume,
Usurp gay honours, and another's bloom;
The various fruits, which different climates bear,
And all the pride the fields and gardens wear;
While from unjuicy limbs without a root
New buds devis'd, and leafy branches shoot.
As humankind can by an act direct,
Perceive and know, then reason and reflect:
So the self-moving spring has power to choose,
These methods to reject, and those to use;
She can design and prosecute an end,
Exert her vigour, or her act suspend;
Free from the insults of all foreign power,
She does her godlike liberty secure;

* Grinling Gibbons, a celebrated statuary and carver in marble and in wood. His exquisite skill in both these departments of art cannot be unremembered by those who have visited Windsor-castle.

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Her right and high prerogative maintains,
Impatient of the yoke, and scorns coercive chains;
She can her airy train of forms disband,
And makes new levees at her own command;
O'er her ideas sovereign she presides,
At pleasure these unites, and those divides.
The ready phanthoms at her nod advance,
And form the busy intellectual dance;
While her fair scenes to vary or supply,
She singles out fit images, that lie
In memory's records, which faithful hold
Objects immense in secret marks inroll'd;
The sleeping forms at her command awake,
And now return, and now their cells forsake,
On active fancy's crowded theatre,
As she directs, they rise or disappear.
Objects, which through the senses make their way,
And just impressions to the soul convey,
Give her occasion first herself to move,
And to exert her hatred, or her love;
Ideas, which to some impulsive seem,
Act not upon the mind, but that on them.
When she to foreign objects audience gives,
Their strokes and motions in the brain perceives;
As these perceptions, we ideas name,
From her own power and active nature came,
So, when discern'd by intellectual light,
Herself her various passions does excite,
To ill her hate, to good her appetite;
To shun the first, the latter to procure,
She chooses means by free elective power;
She can their various habitudes survey,
Debate their fitness, and their merit weigh,

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And, while the means suggested she compares,
She to the rivals this or that prefers.
By her superior power the reasoning soul
Can each reluctant appetite control;
Can every passion rule, and every sense,
Change Nature's course, and with her laws dispense;
Our breathing to prevent, she can arrest
The' extension, or contraction, of the breast;
When pain'd with hunger, we can food refuse,
And wholesome abstinence, or famine choose.
Can the wild beast his instinct disobey,
And from his jaws release the captive prey?
Or hungry herds on verdant pastures lie,
Mindless to eat, and resolute to die?
With heat expiring, can the panting hart
Patient of thirst from the cool stream depart?
Can brutes at will imprison'd breath detain?
Torment prefer to ease, and life disdain?
From all restraint, from all compulsion free,
Unforc'd and unnecessitated, we
Ourselves determine, and our freedom prove,
When this we fly, and to that object move,
Had not the mind a power to will and choose,
One object to embrace, and one refuse;
Could she not act, or not her act suspend,
As it obstructed, or advanc'd her end;
Virtue and vice were names without a cause,
This would not hate deserve, nor that applause;
Justice in vain has high tribunals rear'd,
Whom can her sentence punish, whom reward?
If impious children should their father kill,
Can they be wicked, when they cannot will;
When only causes foreign and unseen
Strike with resistless force the springs within,
Whence in the engine, man, all motion must begin?

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Are vapours guilty which the vintage blast?
Are storms proscrib'd, which lay the forest waste?
Why lies the wretch then tortur'd on the wheel,
If forc'd to treason, or compell'd to steal?
Why does the warrior, by auspicious fate
With laurels crown'd, and clad in robes of state,
In triumph ride amidst the gazing throng,
Deaf with applauses, and the poet's song;
If the victorious, but the brute machine
Did only wreaths inevitable win,
And no wise choice or vigilance has shown,
Mov'd by a fatal impulse, not his own?
Should trains of atoms human sense impel,
Though not so fierce, so strong, so visible
As soldiers arm'd, and do not men arrest
With clubs upheld, and daggers at their breast?
Yet means compulsive are not plainer shown,
When ruffians drive, or conquerors drag us on;
As much we're forc'd, when by an atom's sway
Control'd, as when a tyrant we obey;
And, by whatever cause constrain'd to act,
We merit no reward, no guilt contract.
Our mind of rulers feels a conscious awe,
Reveres their justice, and regards their law:
She rectitude and deviation knows,
That vice from one, from one that virtue flows;
Of these she feels unlike effects within,
From virtue pleasure, and remorse from sin;
Hopes of a just reward by that are fed,
By this, of wrath vindictive, secret dread.
The mind, which thus can rules of duty learn,
Can right from wrong, and good from ill discern;
Which, the sharp stroke of justice to prevent,
Can shame express, can grieve, reflect, repent;

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From fate or chance her rise can never draw,
Those causes know not virtue, vice, or law.
  She can a life succeeding this conceive,
Of bliss or woe an endless state believe.
Dreading the just and universal doom,
And awed by fears of punishment to come,
By hopes excited of a glorious crown,
And certain pleasures in a world unknown:
She can the fond desires of sense restrain,
Renounce delight, and choose distress and pain;
Can rush on danger, can destruction face,
Joyful relinquish life, and death embrace:
She to afflicted virtue can adhere,
And chains and want to prosperous guilt prefer;
Unmov'd, these wild tempestuous steps survey,
And view serene this restless rolling sea.
In vain the monsters, which the coast infest,
Spend all their rage to interrupt her rest;
Her charming song the syren sings in vain,
She can the tuneful hypocrite disdain;
Fix'd and unchang'd the faithless world behold,
Deaf to its threats, and to its favour cold.
Sages, remark, we labour not to show
The will is free, but that the man is so;
For what enlighten'd reasoner can declare
What human will and understanding are?
What science from those objects can we frame
Of which we little know, besides the name?
The learned, who with anatomic art
Dissect the mind, and thinking substance part,
And various powers and faculties assert,
Perhaps by such obstruction of the mind,
Divide the things that are in nature join'd.

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What masters of the schools can make it clear
Those faculties, which two to them appear,
Are not residing in the soul the same,
And not distinct, but by a different name?
  Thus has the muse pursued her hardy theme,
And sung the wonders of this artful frame.
Ere yet one subterranean arch was made,
One cavern vaulted, or one girder laid;
Ere the high rocks did o'er the shores arise,
Or snowy mountains tower'd amidst the skies;
Before the watery troops fil'd off from land,
And lay amidst the rocks, entrench'd in sand;
Before the air its bosom did unfold,
Or burnish'd orbs in blue expansion roll'd,
She sung how Nature then in embryo lay,
And did the secrets of her birth display.
  When after, at the' Almighty's high command,
Obedient waves divided from the land;
And shades and lazy mists were chas'd away,
While rosy light diffus'd the tender day;
When uproar ceas'd, and wild confusion fled,
And new-born Nature rais'd her beauteous head;
She sung the frame of this terrestrial pile,
The hills, the rocks, the rivers, and the soil;
She view'd the sandy frontiers, which restrain
The noisy insults of the' imprison'd main;
Rang'd o'er the wide diffusion of the waves,
The moist cerulean walks, and search'd the coral caves.
  She then survey'd the fluid fields of air,
And the crude seeds of meteors fashion'd there;
Then with continued flight she sped her way,
Mounted, and bold pursued the source of day;

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With wonder of celestial motions sung,
How the pois'd orbs are in the vacant hung;
How the bright sluices of ethereal light,
Now shut, defend the empire of the night;
And now, drawn up with wise alternate care,
Let floods of glory out, and spread with day the air.
Then, with a daring wing, she soar'd sublime,
From realm to realm, from orb to orb did climb:
Swift through the spacious gulf she urg'd her way,
At length emerg'd in empyrean day;
Where far, oh far beyond what mortals see,
In the void districts of immensity:
The mind new suns, new planets, can explore,
And yet beyond can still imagine more.
Thus in bold numbers did the' adventurous muse
To sing the lifeless parts of Nature choose;
And then advanc'd to wonders yet behind,
Survey'd and sung the vegetable kind;
Did lofty woods, and humble brakes review,
Along the valley swept, and o'er the mountain flew.
Then left the muse, the field, and waving grove,
And, unfatigued with grateful labour, strove
To climb the' amazing heights of sense, and sing
The power perceptive, and the inward spring
Which agitates and guides each living thing.
She next essay'd the' embryo's rise to trace
From an unfashion'd, rude, unchannel'd mass;
Sung how the spirits, waken'd in the brain,
Exert their force, and genial toil maintain;
Erect the beating heart, the channels frame,
Unfold entangled limbs, and kindle vital flame:
How the small pipes are in meanders laid,
And bounding life is to and fro convey'd;

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How spirits, which for sense and motion serve,
Unguided find the perforated nerve.
Through every dark recess pursue their flight,
Unconscious of the road, and void of sight,
Yet certain of the way, still guide their motions right.

From thence a nobler flight she did essay,
The mind's extended empire to survey.
She sung the godlike principle of thought,
And how, from objects by the senses brought,
The intellectual imagery is wrought;
How she the modes of beings can discern,
A nice respect, a mere relation learn;
Can all the thin abstracted notions reach,
Which Grecian wits, or, Britain, thine can teach.

Thus has the muse strove to display a part
Of those unnumber'd miracles of art;
Of prudence, conduct, and a wise design,
Which to the' attentive thought conspicuous shine.

Still, vanquish'd atheists! will you keep the field,
And, hard in error, still refuse to yield?
See, all your broken arms lie spread around,
And ignominious rout deforms the ground;
Be wise, and, once admonish'd by a foe,
Where lies your strength, and where your weakness know:
No more at reason's solemn bar appear,
Hardy no more scholastic weapons bear;
Disband your feeble forces, and decline
The war; no more in tinsel armour shine;
Nor shake your bulrush spears, but swift repair
To your strong place of arms, the scoffer's chair:
And thence, supported with a mocking ring,
Sarcastic darts and keen invectives fling,

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Against your foes, and scornful at your feasts
Religion vanquish with derisive jests;
Arm'd with resistless laughter, Heaven assail,
Relinquish reason, and let mirth prevail.

Good Heaven! that men, who vaunt discerning sight,
And arrogant from wisdom's distant height
Look down on vulgar mortals, who revere
A Cause Supreme, should their proud building rear
Without one prop the ponderous pile to bear!
How much the Judge, who does in Heaven preside,
Re-mocks the scoffer, and contemns his pride!
Behold the sad unsufferable hour
Advances near, which will his error cure;
When he compell'd shall drink the wrathful bowl,
And ruin'd feel immortal vengeance roll
Through all his veins, and drench his inmost soul.
O'erwhelm'd with horror, sunk in deep despair,
And lost for ever, will the wretch forbear
To curse his madness, and blaspheme the power
Of his just Sovereign, which he mock'd before?

Hail, King Supreme! of power immense abyss!
Father of Light! Exhaustless Source of bliss!
Thou uncreated Self-existent Cause,
Control'd by no superior being's laws,
Ere infant light essay'd to dart the ray,
Smil'd heavenly sweet, and tried to kindle day:
Ere the wide fields of ether were display'd,
Or silver stars cerulean spheres inlaid;
Ere yet the eldest child of Time was born,
Or verdant pride young Nature did adorn,
Thou art! and didst eternity employ
In unmolested peace, in plenitude of joy.

In its ideal frame the world, design'd
From ages past, lay finish'd in thy mind.

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Conform to this divine-imagin'd plan,
With perfect art the' amazing work began.
Thy glance survey'd the solitary plains,
Where shapeless shade inert and silent reigns;
Then in the dark and undistinguish'd space,
Unfruitful, unenclos'd, and wild of face,
Thy compass for the world mark'd out the destin'd place.
Then didst thou through the fields of barren night
Go forth, collected in Creating Might.
Where Thou almighty vigour didst exert,
Which emicant did this and that way dart
Trough the black bosom of the empty space:
The gulfs confess the' omnipotent embrace,
And, pregnant grown with elemental seed,
Unfinish'd orbs and worlds in embryo breed.
From the crude mass, Omniscient Architect,
Thou for each part materials did select,
And with a master-hand thy world erect.
Labour'd by Thee, the globes, vast lucid buoys,
By Thee uplifted, float in liquid skies;
By Thy cementing word their parts cohere,
And roll by Thy impulsive nod in air.
Thou in the vacant didst the earth suspend,
Advance the mountains, and the vales extend;
People the plains with flocks, with beasts the wood,
And store with scaly colonies the flood.
Next man arose at Thy Creating Word,
Of Thy terrestrial realms vicegerent-lord.
His soul, more artful labour, more refin'd,
And emulous of bright Seraphic Mind,
Ennobled by Thy image, spotless shone,
Prais'd Thee her Author, and ador'd Thy throne;

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Able to know, admire, enjoy her God,
She did her high felicity applaud.
Since Thou didst all the spacious worlds display,
Homage to Thee let all obedient pay.
Let glittering stars, that dance their destin'd ring
Sublime in sky, with vocal planets sing
Confederate praise to Thee, O Great Creator-King!
Let the thin districts of the waving air,
Conveyancers of sound, Thy skill declare.
Let winds, the breathing creatures of the skies,
Call in each vigorous gale, that roving flies
By land or sea; then one loud triumph raise,
And all their blasts employ in songs of praise.
While painted herald-birds Thy deeds proclaim,
And on their spreading wings convey Thy fame;
Let eagles, which in Heaven's blue concave soar,
Scornful of earth, superior seats explore,
And rise with breast erect against the sun,
Be ministers to bear Thy bright renown,
And carry ardent praises to Thy throne.
Ye fish, assume a voice; with praises fill
The hollow rock, and loud reactive hill
Let lions with their roar their thanks express,
With acclamations shake the wilderness.
Let thunder-clouds, that float from pole to pole,
With salvos loud salute Thee as they roll.
Ye monsters of the sea, ye noisy waves,
Strike with applause the repercussive caves.
Let hail and rain, let meteors form'd of fire,
And lambent flames, in this bless'd work conspire.
Let the high cedar and the mountain pine
Lowly to thee, Great King, their heads incline.

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Let every spicy odoriferous tree
Present its incense and its balm to Thee!
And thou, Heaven's viceroy o'er this world below,
In this bless'd task superior ardour show:
To view thyself, inflict thy reason's ray,
Nature's replenish'd theatre survey;
Then all on fire the Author's skill adore,
And in loud songs extol Creating Power.
Degenerate minds, in mazy error lost,
May combat Heaven, and impious triumphs boast;
But, while my veins feel animating fires,
And vital air this breathing breast inspires,
Grateful to Heaven, I'll stretch a pious wing,
And sing His praise, who gave me power to sing.

END OF VOL. XV.

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